



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON LEARNING IN LATER LIFE**

**UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE,
SENIOR STUDIES INSTITUTE, GLASGOW, SCOTLAND**

9-11 MAY 2007

EDITORS: VAL BISSLAND AND BRIAN MCKECHNIE

**CONFERENCE THEME: A LEGACY OF LEARNING
SHARING GLOBAL EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING IN LATER LIFE**

A LEGACY OF LEARNING

SHARING GLOBAL EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING IN LATER LIFE

Overview

The 1st International Conference on Learning in Later Life was held at the University of Strathclyde, Senior Studies Institute in Glasgow, Scotland from 9th to 11th May 2007. The conference featured 7 keynote speakers and 45 submitted papers, selected for inclusion by the programme committee. Over 200 delegates attended the conference, representing 20 countries from Europe, North America, Asia and Australia. Conference participants came from a wide variety of backgrounds, including policy makers, academics, practitioners and older learners from across the globe.

The Conference was scheduled to coincide with the 20th anniversary of the University of Strathclyde's Learning in Later Life programme, and included a number of commemorative events. Among these, the Association for Education & Ageing and NIACE formally launched the publication of the Frank Glendinning Memorial Lecture given in 2006 by Professor Brian Groombridge. (http://www.cpa.org.uk/aea/Frank_Glendinning_Memorial_Lecture-2006.pdf)

The conference papers are organised alphabetically by speaker and workshop presenters. Each workshop session included two presentations on similar subjects and a brief summary of key points arising from the workshop discussion were recorded. These workshop reports are not included in these Conference Proceedings but are available on the Senior Studies Institute web site, which also has PowerPoint presentations and conference photographs available to download. A few workshop presentations were not supported by a written paper and only the abstract and speaker biography are included in the Conference Proceedings. Keynote speakers submitted papers for plenary session participants, which are also included in the Proceedings. To make the conference proceedings as widely available as possible, the organisers have chosen to publish the conference content in an unrefereed, electronic format on the University web site. (<http://www.ell.strath.ac.uk/ssi.html>) The copyright for each paper is retained by the individual authors and are included in these Proceedings with their permission.

It is hoped that this conference will be the first of a regular series of international conferences on Learning in Later Life, and that the research, experience and discussion recorded will be of benefit in providing greater opportunity for older adults to participate in education to meet their own needs and aspirations.

Brian McKechnie
Senior Studies Institute
University of Strathclyde

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A Legacy of Learning

Sharing global experiences of learning in later life

Conference 9-11 May 2007

Conference Programme

Wednesday 9th May

- 5pm - 5.45pm Optional tour of central Glasgow departing from Travel Inn
- 7.00pm - 8.00pm Civic Reception: Glasgow City Chambers
 Welcome from Lord Provost's representative
 Delegates make own arrangements for evening meal

Thursday 10th May Theme: 'Experiences of Learning in Later Life'

- 8.45am - 10am Registration Tea/Coffee
- 10am - 11.15am Opening Plenary Session: Chair Ann Hughes: Deputy Principal
 Musical Opening: 'Little Elegy and Dance' by Raymond A Thomson *
- Welcome: Professor Andrew Hamnett, Principal, University of Strathclyde
 - Professor Sir Graham Hills, Past Principal University of Strathclyde
 "Always say Yes"
 - L Hart, Director of Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde
 "20 years of Learning in Later Life – a time to celebrate and celebrate"
 - Discussion

11.15 - 11.50am Coffee
 Go to workshops

11.55 - 1.10pm	Workshop A2 McCance 2 R Thomson C Groot	Workshop A3 McCance 3 S Miller D Murphy	Workshop A4 Rm 773 G Duncan H Fraser	Workshop A6 Rm 777 Y Coull M Allinson	Workshop A7 Rm 783 B H Standford G B Lewis
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1.10pm - 2pm Lunch

2pm - 3.15pm	W/shop B1 McCance 1 P Vavrin K Percy	W/shop B2 McCance 2 A Pincas U Kroppe	W/shop B3 McCance 3 A Fricke P Schweitzer	W/shop B4 Rm 773 H Marston J Schmolling	W/shop B5 Rm 772 L Stollwerk R Schneider	W/shop B7 Rm 783 Edmondson J Ferguson
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3.15pm Reconvene in main conference room

- 3.30pm - 4.30pm Plenary Session: Chair B McKechnie
- Speaker: Robert Rae, Director, Scotland's Futures Forum
 'Growing Older and Wiser Together; a futures view on positive ageing'
 - Speaker: Kali Lightfoot, Director, National Resource Centre, Osher LLLI
 'Transformations through teaching and learning'
 - Discussion

4.30pm Delegates invited to SSI Art Exhibition, Collins Gallery

Publication launch of 'Extra Time: Arts, health and learning in later life' by Brian Groombridge, published by National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) with the Association for Education and Ageing (AEA). Brian was the Frank Glendenning Memorial Lecturer for 2006, at an AEA/NIACE international conference in Brighton. Drinks, nibbles and a free copy of the publication available.

7.00pm - 10.00pm Conference Dinner – Fruitmarket

After dinner speaker: Professor Brian Groombridge

Friday 11th May Theme: 'Purposes of Learning in Later Life'

8.45am - 10am Registration Tea/Coffee

10am - 11.30am Plenary Session: Chair L Hart

- Dr Ron Mannheimer, Director North Carolina Centre for Creative Retirement
'Lifelong Learning in the Coming Ageless Society'
- Professor Jilong Zhou, Vice-president of Wuhan University for the Aged
'The Present Situation of Wuhan University for the Aged and Its Future'
- Professor Gillian Boulton-Lewis, Queensland University of Technology
'Ageing and Learning in Australia'
- Discussion

11.30am - 11.50am Coffee

Go to workshops

11.55 - 1.10pm

Workshops

W/shop C2 McCance 2 G Smith L St John	W/shop C3 McCance 3 A Withnall N B Smith	W/shop C4 Rm 773 C Ronda L Lawson	W/shop C5 Rm 772 S Hetzner G Geddes	W/shop C6 Rm 777 C Rafman P Clayton	W/shop C7 Rm 783 J Soulsby P Scrutton
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1.10pm - 2pm

Lunch

2pm - 3.15pm

Workshops

W/shop D2 McCance 2 B Findsen A Elhert	W/shop D3 McCance 3 S Dow R Schanner	W/shop D4 Rm 773 P Hodgkinson V Bissland	W/shop D5 Rm 772 S Blair F Sagebiel	W/shop D6 Rm 777 E Franken J McIntosh	W/shop D7 Rm 783 G Sieben B de Jong
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3.15pm Reconvene in main conference room

3.30pm - 4.20pm Concluding Plenary Session: Chair B McKechnie

- Professor Robert Wright, University of Strathclyde
Concluding Keynote address
- Brian McKechnie, Senior Studies Institute
Concluding Remarks
- Conference ends

* 'Little Elegy and Dance' was specially written for the Conference and played on the horn by Dr Raymond A Thomson, Deputy Director of Lifelong Learning, University of Strathclyde

Conference Papers

STAGE 1 FOR AN APPRENTICE FUTURIST

Martin Allinson BSc Hons, (Wales), MIEEE MEI (Canada), MIE (Singapore)
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Abstract

The learner is a 71-year-old, retired, British resident of rural SE Asia whose first-ever on-line learning experience was to take a course of “Introduction to Futures Studies” with an American university. Numbered POLSC171, it is a 3-credit undergraduate course at the University of Hawai’i in Honolulu. He now sees POLSC171 as having been stage 1 of his apprenticeship as a futurist, the MA as stage 2, and is planning that stage 3 will be a PhD study of the future for Advanced Geragogy---i.e. the facilitation of MA and PhD programmes for retirees.

Background

After a career (or careering around) in electrical engineering with forays into the teaching of it, and three years as a widower, the learner married and settled in Northeastern Thailand. Some years of making temporary visits to England as an economic migrant to do Supply Teaching followed, and then six months in an International School in Bangkok. After retiring at 70, he soon became bored. So he enrolled at (or forced his way upon) his nearest regional University to pursue an MA in the Social Sciences, via a research topic entitled: “Intended Return of Village Daughters: the impact of village daughters returning for retirement after living in the West”. These are women who have made lasting cross-cultural marriages and reconciled their girlhood acculturation in the yeoman peasantry with a Western culture and who are returning to retire with a supportive Western husband in tow. (If any of the foregoing attributes did not apply, they wouldn’t be intending to retire to their girlhood village---they would be staying put, or going elsewhere.) The researcher soon found that this was a topic in the field of Futures Studies as all these women were still in the West, married to ‘baby boomers’ who have yet to retire. As his MA supervisor had to go to the USA for three months, the researcher filled the time by partaking of POLSC171.

Bestriding three cultures

Triculturalism has one parallel with trilingualism---the constantly-recurring challenge to decide which to use when. The paper will describe how that challenge was met in various ways in various modules of POLSC171. It will outline the author’s interpretation in three cultures of Franz Kafka’s: “ Probably all education is but two things: first, the parrying of the ignorant children’s impetuous assault on the truth, and second, the gentle, imperceptible, step-by-step initiation of the humiliated children into the Lie.” (Though the author wishes that Kafka had used the word ‘schooling’ in place of ‘education’.) Finally, it will describe the means by which it was found possible to mitigate the trials and tribulations of the loneliness of the long-distance learner.

Martin Allinson

A happy-go-lucky, 72-year-old generalist, who roamed the world experiencing various specialist jobs and life-styles, from posh to peasant and from the Arctic to the Tropics, funded by nice little earners in academia, industry and politics. Now opting to enjoy Second Youth and forgo Third Age.

This paper is a learning experience by one 'later-life' learner. It will describe the context within which the learning experience was undertaken, the experience itself, and the tentative conjecture that was drawn from the experience by the learner. Others may differ [1]. It will end by suggesting possibly-desirable follow-up activity for the learner and others.

The title of the paper gives an abbreviated description of the experience:

Retiree: the learner is a 71-year-old retired engineer and teacher of technical college and undergraduate students. He moved between jobs in engineering and academia several times. In industry, he was an operations engineer in radio telephone, in television recording, in radar, and in power generation as a nuclear reactor controller. In academia, he worked in colleges in Canada, England, Brunei and Singapore. He got a modest early-retirement package at the age of 50. Retiring proved to be such a pleasant transition that he repeated the exercise five times in the next two decades.

Undergraduate: POLSC171 "Introduction to Futures Studies" is a 3-credit undergraduate course at the University of Hawai'i in Honolulu [2].

It was developed, and has been taught for many years, by Professor Jim Dator. [3]

On-line: In 1998, Dr Dator converted it from a traditional structure of lectures plus seminars into an on-line study experience for his students [4].

Triple-cross-cultural: The learner lives in rural Northeastern Thailand (which has as little resemblance to 'sun-sand-and-sleaze seaside Thailand' as the Highlands of Scotland have to Brighton) [5]. He is engaged in a study, "Intended Return of Village Daughters", for an MA in the Social Sciences. His topic is the future gain in the 'social capital' of the villages of rice-growing semi-sufficient yeoman-peasantry when Thai wives with Western husbands return there for retirement.

Since each academia reflects the culture of the country in which it is conducted, there is a culture gap between the British academic emphases that he experienced in his earlier life and the Thai academic emphases. Similarly, the learner felt that he should be wary of a potential culture gap between his British-Thai background and that of an off-shore American state.

Learning experience: The learner was keen to learn and not merely to study. Hence the standard motions (of the packing of short-term memory plus regurgitation) needed to be accompanied by reflection, decision, and action. For that, he was able to use his participation in the virtual-staffroom forums of the Times Educational Supplement website. By choosing appropriate topics to which to make 'saloon-bar sage' contributions, he was able to practise expressing the broader historical view of the past-present-future that he was acquiring [6]. That was the 'doing' (or 'participating') part of "We only learn by doing" [7].

The structure of POLSC171

The course is modular, with each of the 15 modules requiring to be completed in less than a week in order to keep on schedule. To be accepted to register, it is necessary to submit an acceptable 500-word essay entitled "A day in my life in 30 years time" [8]. Fortunately, Jim Dator's Long Vitae was on the internet, so it was possible to get an idea of what approach to the pre-registration essay would probably be welcomed by him, and which might start to establish rapport [9]. The fee for registration as a non-resident student for the summer session of the UofH'I Outreach College was US\$455 (approximately £240).

Course description for POLSC171:

This course is an interactive, multimedia introduction to Political Futures. The course is designed to provide comprehensive and provocative content for three basic areas: why we need to think about the "futures;" how to think about the "futures;" and an active engagement of some of the major substantive "ideas" (problems and opportunities) which may lie in the "futures." Emphasis is placed on interactive exploration and discussion of these topics using Internet research and communication tools [10].

Assignments

Each module required: (1) the writing of a 300-600 word paper
(2) the answering of a set of questions
(3) the defining of a set of terms.

Reading of the material provided by the course, associated following-up of articles on other websites, plus completing the assignments, took the learner an estimated average ten hours per module. For most modules there were also several hours of 'brooding', and of retrieval of experiences from down Memory Lane, interspersed during the period of preparation of the essay.

Effects of the learning experience on the learner

Participation in the course developed in the learner a broader view of the 'march of mankind' than he had previously had. The most obvious effect was the stiffening of his long-standing opinion that insufficient consideration is given by we-who-are-alive-at-present to the welfare of future generations. In particular, we should be more frugal in our use of exosomatic energy. For over thirty years he has been saying: "Our grandchildren will curse us for burning the coal, oil and gas that we should have left for them to use as petrochemical feedstocks for making materials, fertilizers and pharmaceuticals." [11]

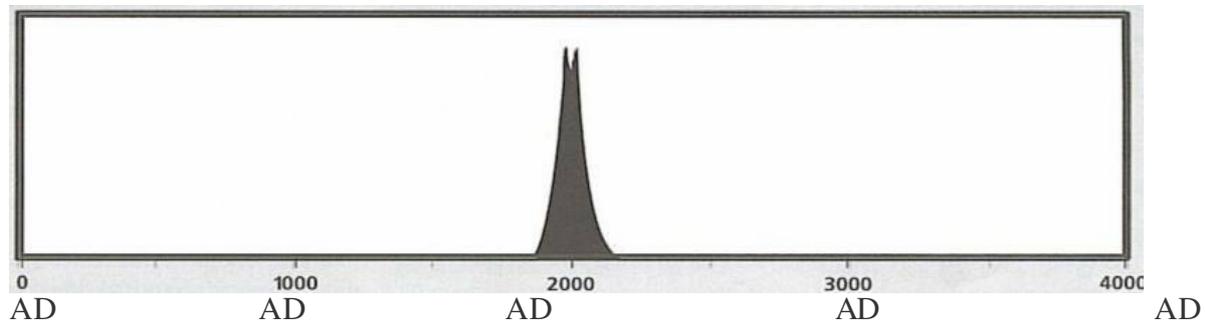


Figure 1. The exosomatic-energy curve of history. [12]

The course also led to more understanding of the ways in which the Baby-Boom Generation differs from the previous Silent Generation [13]. The Silent Generation were brought up in the hard times following the Depression, during WWII, and in the Austerity Period till the mid-1950s. Adults were busy and stressed, so children were expected "to be seen and not heard", and escaped over-indulgent and over-protective parenting.

The most useful techniques learnt were the strategy of identifying 'established trends' and analyzing their underlying support to predict their future growth or decline, and the strategy of identifying 'emerging issues'. The course engendered thinking, which persists in the learner, about present events from the viewpoint of the historians of the future. Which proves that learning took place: behaviour changed.

Placing the learning in the context of the learner's life

In the six years prior to taking POLSC171, the learner had supplemented his pensions by periodic forays as an economic migrant to England, where he worked as a Supply Teacher. In

total, he served 248 days in 28 schools. He could do this as he has a ‘magic’ little letter, dated 1962, with the Ministry of Education number RP 61/7557 on it. This says he can teach ‘in all schools (including nursery)...’, unlike later entrants to what was the teaching profession, who are restricted to the area in which they specialized during their training.

Never having taught in schools, he found himself very much in the position of a covert program evaluator of Yorkshire’s less-attractive Secondary Schools and Pupil Referral Units [14]. In Kafka’s terms, he worked at the parrying of impetuous youth and amongst those who were initiating them into The Lie [15]. The Lie, as promulgated in Yorkshire’s schools by the curriculum-delivery operatives, is that middling success at the time of the rite-of-passage called G.C.S.E. will correlate with successful later employment prospects. This could only be true in the highly-unlikely event of the re-opening of the closed textile mills (for labour-intensive employment in which the school experience seems still to be designed).

The learner used to salve his conscience by pointing out to the ‘bottom sets’ (which he always volunteered to take) that a middle-range job will go to s/he who is experienced in it, and not to the possessor of a *c.v.* showing middling academic-examination success. Those in the ‘bottom sets’ who had the time, since they weren’t expected to do homework or prepare for the examinations, could get genuine work experience by volunteering to help a tradesperson in the evenings, at the weekends, and in the holidays. They would then be best placed to hear of upcoming vacancies and to ‘book’ one to move into when school-leaving-age was reached. Those in the ‘upper sets’ would then be left wondering why there were no advertisements of jobs for school-leavers.

He was quite cavalier in his disregard of whether or not what he felt would best be taught to his classes was in or out of the National Curriculum. As the school had asked his agency to send a teacher, he exercised the judgment of a teacher. If the school had wanted a curriculum-delivery operative it should have said so---and he would have refused the booking.

The Really Big Lie, though, is the unspoken assumption that Britain can continue as an exporting-importing nation. There is nothing that the British will, in 20 years time, be able to offer to do for foreign earnings that some other country’s citizens won’t be offering to do cheaper. Hence Britain will have no wherewithal with which to purchase imports of oil and food. Today’s children should be ‘learning by doing’: practising the skills of gardening and of living with minimal inputs of exosomatic energy. It is appalling that children are compelled to spend half their waking hours on half the days of the year, wasting them in the classrooms as they are. The historians of the future will describe the National Curriculum as having been institutionalized child-abuse. As a greatgrandfather, the learner is disgusted at how his children’s and grandchildren’s generations are failing to prepare his greatgrandchildren for what will be their lot.

In Thailand, The Lie is different. There, children do learn to garden, and the children of the yeoman-peasantry learn (as children in rural Britain used to be told) that “Good farmers farm for their grandchildren”. But they are still initiated to a view of social organization that Britain has rejected over the past century [16].

It used to be promulgated in a verse of ‘All Things Bright And Beautiful’:

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high and lowly,
And ordered their estate.

In America, The Lie is the familiar fantasy of “eternal growth of GNP”. There the children need

to understand that their future cannot be their parents' present of importing consumer goods and oil that they don't need (largely from China and the Middle East) and 'paying' for them in promissory notes that the next generation is expected to honour. The USA is particularly badly-disadvantaged to start coping with the tightening conflict between population, use of exosomatic energy and agricultural ecology [17].

Conjecture on the future of 'Learning In Later Life'.

The next to come will be the baby-boomer retirees. Like retirees of the GI Generation and then the Silent Generation, they will each have to decide in which ways they spend their years between retiring and Second Childhood. Each will either ignore the 'march of mankind', or just observe it, or observe it and participate in it. The choices are the restful quiescence of the three Gs of Golf, Gardening and the Grandchildren, the active edu-tainment of Third Age, or a feisty Second Youth. With better health and longer life (and, in some cases, more affluence) it is reasonable to conjecture that there will be a shift of proportions in favour of the second and third of those choices, at the expense of the first.

Third Age edu-tainment is already sufficiently developed that it can expand to meet the demand. But the feisty Second Youth may be quite a challenge to institutions of education. It is futures, particularly the near-futures of the next 50 years that particularly interest inquiring minds of retirement age [18]. It is the broad picture that they are interested in studying. Unfortunately, academia has blindly followed industry into division of labour and specialization [19]. The ability to develop generalist, broad-spectrum, overall-coherent scenarios is not the forte of present-day over-narrowly-specialised academics [20]. Supervising the feisty Second Youth brigade in their Masters and PhD programs will tax young and middle-aged supervisors. But Vice-Chancellors can be expected to want it done. The whiff of bequests on the breeze will make the V-C noses twitch.

The prospect of exploring the doing of the PhD in the eighth decade of life is attractive to this learner. Any more, for any more? Supervision, anyone? We will live in interesting times.

Footnotes:

[1] "We do not see things as they are: we see things as we are." ATalmudic saying.

[2] Described at: <http://www.hawaii.edu/polsc171/>

[3] Short vitae, via: <http://www.futures.hawaii.edu/activities.html>

[4] The conversion process is described on page 2 of:

From Tsunamis to Long Waves and Back, published in two Issues of *Futures* in 1999. Available at: www.futures.hawaii.edu/dator/futures/tsu2longwvs.pdf

[5] At 16 deg 59 min North, 102 deg 53 min East. NE Thailand (which is about the size of England and Wales) is also known as Isaan or Esarn.

[6] As 'GreatGrandDad' on <http://www.tes.co.uk/section/staffroom/>

[7] In *Democracy and Education* (1916), early in Chapter 1, John Dewey wrote: "It may fairly be said, therefore, that any social arrangement that remains vitally social, or vitally shared, is educative to those who participate in it. Only when it becomes cast in a mold and runs in a routine way does it lose its educative power." Available at: <http://www.worldwideschool.org/library/books/socl/education/>

[8] "I should be so lucky, now being already 71 years old" was only eleven words, so a degree of 'poetic license' had to be applied.

[9] On the website of the Hawai'i Research Center for Futures Studies (HRCFS) at: <http://www.futures.hawaii.edu/activities.html>

[10] This description of the course is copied from: <http://www.hawaii.edu/polsc171/00-1stUsr/PS-syllabus.html> which also gives an exhaustive explanation and listing of the Course Objectives.

[11] Deffeyes, Kenneth S. *Hubbert's Peak: The Impending World Oil Shortage*. New Jersey, USA: Princeton University Press, 2001.

[12] Figure 1 is copied from: <http://www.lifeaftertheoilcrash.net/Index.html> , which had sourced it from the Community Solution website.

[13] The books of William Strauss and Neil Howe on age-cohort analysis are popular and provocative on 'the Generations'. An overview is available http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strauss_and_Howe.

[14] Patton, Michael Quinn. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. USA: SAGE, 1980.

[15] The origin of it seems elusive, but Kafka is believed to have written:

“Probably all education is but two things, first parrying of the ignorant children's impetuous assault on the truth, and second, the gentle, imperceptible, step-by-step initiation of the humiliated children into the lie.”

[16] In Mulder, Niels. *Thai Images: The Culture of the Public World*.

Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, there is a detailed analysis of the way that social knowledge is presented in what is taught in the various parts of the Thailand elementary and high school curricula.

[17] *The Tightening Conflict: Population, Energy Use, and the Ecology of Agriculture* by Mario Giampietro and David Pimentel (1994), at: <http://dieoff.org/page69.htm>

[18] Roger Jackson, in *Continuing Your Education in Retirement* quotes the Dean of the UCLA Extension Program as saying:

“Some of our smartest students are in their 70s and 80s”. At: <http://www.ameriprise.com/amp/global/sitelets/dreambook/article-3.asp>

[19] In 1959, C.P. Snow was, in the Rede Lecture, already warning of this.

See Snow, C.P. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. UK: Cambridge University Press, 1959 and

Snow, C.P. *The Two Cultures and a Second Look*. UK: Cambridge University Press 1964.

[20] In Chapter 2 of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Strauss Giroux, 1999), Thomas L. Friedman quotes eminent academics on the dangers of the present over-narrow specialization in thinking, researching, and teaching in Universities.

Martin Allinson, 12 March 2007

LEARNING IN LATER LIFE AND THE BRAIN SCIENCES – THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONS

Val Bissland, Senior Studies Institute, University of Strathclyde

We are all unique people. However our brains have the common feature of being programmed to learn from experience throughout our lives, although we will choose to learn in different ways and have different strengths. Recent developments in the brain sciences have created insights into how our 100 billion neurons form 'connectivity webs' that show up as brainwaves as we lay down memory traces.

Neurotransmitters are the versatile molecules that chemically connect neurons at the synapses. They are 'molecules of emotion' (Pert,1986), coursing through our bodies as well as our brains. Learning and emotions are biologically enmeshed in our evolutionary history. We learn best in a nurturing social and cultural environment where we feel valued and which values learning. Conversely, stress shuts down access to higher mental processes.

This has profound implications for learning in later life. Mood-elevating neurotransmitters increase the flow of acetylcholine – the lubricant that allows neural networks to grow and memories to be retained. A positive, encouraging emotional tone in a learning situation generates a feeling of confidence and pending success, amplifies good feelings and lays down a powerful trace in the emotional memory bank that will stand older learners in good stead and increase retention and resilience in the face of difficulties.

This paper explores through metaphor the keys to integration of mind and emotions that leads to successful learning in later life, such as better listening abilities, reaction times, recall and self regulation of stress.

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Introduction

Professor Marian C. Diamond, one of the world's foremost neuroanatomists is quoted as saying: "Stimulating the brain works its magic right up until the end, and may even advance when we call it "the end"? We used to believe, as scientists, that the loss of dendrites was an inevitable correlate of the aging process. It was simply our fate. Yes, it takes concerted attention to stave off the "inevitable" we have accepted for so long, but is the price really that high? Is it too much work to follow a healthy diet, enjoy plenty of exercise, seek out new challenges and get lots of love?"

Marion C Diamond's ground-breaking work over many years points to the fact that the brain continues to develop throughout one's life given proper stimulation. Positive, nurturing environments that encourage interaction and response are the prime conditions for building complex neural networks. Therefore our environment, experience, learning or lack of it - and emotions, literally reshape our brains for good or for ill. This paper focuses on the emotional aspects, acknowledging that diet, exercise and challenge are equally important in making the most of our most priceless asset – our human intelligence.

Firstly, let's ask what exactly is meant by human intelligence? Is it something that only goes on in the head? The emerging new scientific model allows for the influence of the mind on the brain and the body. And using this model of human experience it is natural to expect learning to involve the entire physiology. Therefore stage of physical development, our personal comfort and our emotional state will profoundly affect the ability to learn. Emotions and higher level thinking cannot, in fact, be separated, with emotions playing a crucial role in the storage and recall of information. A learning environment that promotes positive attitudes among students and teachers to learning and to each other will hugely influence performance.

So where have these ideas come from? Until quite recently feelings were considered to be beyond the competence of science, even by neuroscientists. One of the leading exponents in this new field is António Damasio who argues that the neurobiology of feelings is just as viable as studies of vision, perception or memory. Damasio extols the overwhelming role of emotion in life and in learning. The mind is not just the brain but is "a process" of body signals to the brain arriving through the nervous system and the neuropeptides in the bloodstream. This allows the brain to construct neural maps of every part of the body, down to the cells, and then develops its "feelings" as a result. It is not easy to understand such complexity. However metaphors can help provide insights into complex ideas. So looking at the brain as a maze, as a theatre, as a theme park, as a magic carpet and as a pioneering trail hopefully can provide insightful glimpses into this new paradigm. (See Mindmaps.)

A biological maze

A maze of cells

Nothing in the known universe comes close to matching the complexity of the human brain. The brain weighs around 1.4 kilos – about 2% of the body weight - and requires 20% of the oxygen breathed. The wrinkled outer part, called the neo-cortex, has six layers and is the most advanced in evolutionary terms, governing higher-order capabilities, such as language, creativity and problem solving. Early scientists thought we had two brains just as we have two kidneys and two lungs. Of course, the brain has two quite distinct halves on the left and right of the head, joined at a wide flat junction just below the cortex called the corpus callosum. In the late 1960s, Roger Sperry's discovery that the two brain hemispheres had different dominant functions was a major breakthrough. At the corpus callosum, 300 million neurons or brain cells connect the two halves and their separate storage areas – a quite amazing dense neural maze! Most communication between the left and right brain happens at this junction in a constant back and forth frenzied flow of information. The human brain is unsurpassed in its resilience and capacity for adaptation with the concept of brain 'plasticity' transforming neuroscience.

The evolutionary maze of three brains

In 1978, neurologist Paul MacLean proposed that the skull holds not one brain, but three, each representing a layer of our evolutionary history. They operate "like three interconnected biological computers, each with its own special intelligence, its own subjectivity, its own sense of time and space and its own memory". The wrinkled neo-cortex is the most advanced outer part that engages in the processes of thinking, learning, perception, awareness and judgment.

However nesting deep down in the middle is the limbic area or 'mammalian' brain, which closely resembles the brains of early mammals. It is very powerful, but not in a 'thinking' way. It processes emotions, instincts, feeding, fighting, reproduction and fleeing impulses. Below this, at the back of the head, is a small 'reptilian brain', sometimes called the 'Little Brain' which includes the brain stem and the cerebellum. In animals such as reptiles and fish, the 'Little Brain' dominates. It is not an adaptive brain like the neo-cortex, but a rigid, controlling one, sustaining unconscious functions such as balance, breathing and movement through the autonomic nervous system.

This idea of the tri-brain has been very influential, forcing a rethink about how much control the rational mind has. It been assumed previously that the neo-cortex was the great controller, capable of over-riding basic feelings. Maclean has shown that this is not the case and that the limbic system hijacks higher mental functions when it needs to. Although scientists now believe that this is an oversimplification, it is significant for learning, as it explains why it is difficult to take in new information or to make decisions under extreme stress or when you are uncomfortably hot, cold, tired, hungry or thirsty. It also underlines the evolutionary nature of our brain development that continues to this day. This is put succinctly and with humour by Ornstein and Sobel (1987): “We carry our evolution inside us, within the different structures of the brain, structures built in different eras.... each one designed to maintain stability in its organism as animals moved from the sea to land, to the trees, to the savannahs of Eastern Africa, to Fifth Avenue.”

A branching maze

It is estimated that we have 100 billion brain cells and every one packs more punch than a desktop computer. Neurons are not conventional round cells but have branches called dendrites (the Greek word for tree) that stretch out to connect with other cells. They form a spiky fringe around the cell body, allowing each cell to receive signals from more than 100,000 others. Each neuron also has receiving appendages called axons that transmit impulses to the dendrites of other neurons. They can extend for as much as three feet - the equivalent to a kite with a 40ft tail! The places on the cell wall where neurons transmit and receive messages are called synapses. A synapse is a tiny gap at the terminal of the axon across which an electro-chemical message jumps. Our thoughts and actions are the traffic of these signals between cells.

Neural connections are typically made in a dense tangle of axon terminals, dendrites and synapses, which together form a ‘connectivity web’. It is the electrical activity in this neural maze that generates brainwaves that can be measured. So a thought is, in effect, an electro-chemical event. We share this phenomenal communication system with other animals from the jelly fish up.

In humans, each cell has between 1000 and 10,000 branching connections to other cells, creating a network of a million billion connections. This number is so large that it outstrips the number of particles in the known universe. This profusion of connecting cells allows us to capture our experience rather like a digital video camera records scenes, events, faces, voices, sounds and sights on disk. The difference is that our ‘disk’ has limitless capacity - our neo-cortex will never run out of space! But we do need to focus, organise and reflect on our experience if we are to have any hope of not being overwhelmed and confused by the volume of information bombarding our brains.

Finding a way through the maze

As we store memories of our experiences and reflect on what is important, we construct an understanding of who we are, what the world is like, what is good for us and what we don’t want. We learn to build a uniquely individual intelligent view of the world, which guides each of us as we plan the future, build relationships and make new discoveries. Over time, we beat familiar pathways through the brain maze and develop habits of thinking that become our reality and part of our personality. This also includes attitudes about our capability for learning.

Amazing brain juices

“Scientific revolutions are very interesting. The way they happen is that most people deny them and resist them. And then there's more and more of an explosion, and there's a paradigm shift”.

Candace Pert's landmark work on the biochemical pathways of the brain helped to spark the neuroscience explosion that led to the knowledge that the mind and body are one, with the same chemical messengers in both. There is overwhelming evidence that our bodies react to

suggestion, not to reality, and that even a broken leg mends at a rate linked to our attitudes, hopes and fears. Neurotransmitters and neuropeptides are the versatile molecules that chemically connect neurons at the synapses and relay messages not just to other brain cells but to other parts of the body. Extremely small amounts subtly underlie all our moods, from ecstasy to deepest depression. Dopamine, noradrenergic and serotonin are the main mood-elevating neurotransmitters. These opiate-like endorphins trigger an increased flow of acetylcholine - the lubricant that allows neural networks to grow and memories to be captured. Listening to a glorious piece of music, experiencing a breathtaking sunset, sharing a good joke, stroking an animal, enjoying a wonderful walk and mastering something challenging are events that give us a chemical 'brain bath', which accounts for the pleasurable feelings that accompany these activities and make them unforgettable.

A theatre: the emotional brain

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.* Shakespeare

By now, you should have a fair idea of your brain's evolutionary multi-layered system. Apart from the sophisticated cerebral cortex that allows you to build your intellect, you have inherited a mammalian brain with important functions - setting the emotional tone of the mind, generating emotional reactions linked to survival, storing charged emotional memories, motivating, influencing appetite and sleep, and promoting bonding. It is also the gateway to long-term memory. Because of its primitive nature, it has the potential to over-ride your rational brain and make you to behave in ways you may regret! This makes the emotional brain the perfect candidate for the theatrical metaphor. What better context than Shakespearian theatre to observe the tragedy (or comedy) of human existence when people's irrational feelings and misperceptions lead them to make the most tragic or crazy mistakes.

There is also a sense in which we see our own life as a passing play, full of mystery and magic, and where we came from and where we go will only be known when we get there. However, understanding the role of emotions and managing our emotions is a lifelong task. We learn through living to manage more skilfully the strong, potentially destructive feelings that are part of our biology. The challenge is not to fall into the trap of being 'mere players' controlled by a 'biological' script. Our emotions are tuned by upbringing, schooling, the role models of our early years and the norms expected in a civilised society. But how we deal with frustration, disappointment, rejection, conflict, competition and difficulty has a huge bearing on how successfully we will be perform as lifelong learners.

The power of emotions

"The really important genes are not the ones which tell us what to do, but the ones which give us the ability to change behaviour in response to our environment." It is useful to understand a little about the limbic system, although it is important to remember that all brain functions are bound up together and operate as a holistic body-brain system. The mammalian brain is a group of cellular structures sandwiched between the brainstem and the cortex and linked to the pea-sized pituitary gland, the master gland of the hormonal system. The hypothalamus is the bundle of nerve fibres of our pleasure centre or reward circuit and it drives much of our goal-seeking behaviour. This is where we develop our addictions to chocolate and alcohol. A simple smile also reflects neurotransmitter activity deep inside the hypothalamus.

The amygdala, on the other hand, is the key limbic structure for the co-ordination of behavioural, immunological and neuroendocrine responses to environmental threats. The amygdala compares new, incoming sensory information with information already stored in the emotional memory bank. It then makes a split-second decision about the potential threat. Since it has extensive connections to the autonomic nervous system in the 'reptilian brain', the amygdala can 'hijack'

other neural pathways, activating an emotional response before our higher brain centre receives the sensory input. The hippocampus is critical for transferring information from working memory to long-term memory. It is vulnerable to cortisol damage from unremitting stress. This can cause it to shrink irreversibly over time, creating concerning memory problems.

Adverse reactions

So what is the significance of the limbic system for learners? As stored emotional memory patterns affect our moment-to-moment perceptions, emotions and behaviours, a learner may find that the new tutor who walks through the door reminds her of another teacher with whom she had a bad experience, or a bully from school, or the person at work who upsets her. This immediately generates an emotional thought or feeling – ‘emotional’ in that she ‘sees’ the new person as if he actually were that ‘bad’ person. Adverse mental reactions and emotional responses can generate instantaneous physiological changes in the autonomic nervous system, hormonal and immune systems, which have very real effects throughout the entire body and brain. Plato, the Greek philosopher, said: "All learning has an emotional base" and when we look at the concept of emotional memory, we can understand why.

Awareness

We can't control ‘limbic’ reactions because they are built into our brain's hard-wiring. But with insight we can recognise this for what it is and think again. How many people have returned to adult learning and relived unpleasant feelings of rejection from their school days as they sit in a classroom and feel their stress levels rising? They may simply take the first opportunity to flee from these uncomfortable feelings and never return. Teachers need to make a concerted effort to be especially friendly, approachable, open and non-threatening, particularly at the early stages of any return to learning. When the present is an unknown quantity and the future is uncharted territory, triggering the memory of a bad emotional experience may jeopardise the whole enterprise.

Interacting systems

Contrary to popular belief, emotions are not always negative and do not always serve as opponents to rational thought. Instead, emotion and cognition can best be thought of as interacting systems, each with its own type of intelligence. Neurologists now stress the rationality of emotion and the importance of emotions in decision-making. Emotional intelligence, for example, is an essential skill in leadership. It is known that, if the brain is injured in the areas that integrate emotional and cognitive systems, a person can no longer function properly even though their mental abilities are intact. "Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth." Mayer & Salovey, 1997.

Coherence

Studies show that the key to the successful integration of the mind and emotions is in bringing them into harmony with one another. Within the wiring of the brain, the neural connections from the limbic system upward to the neo-cortex are stronger and more numerous than the connections from the neo-cortex down to the limbic. Once an emotion is experienced, it becomes a powerful motivator of future behaviours, affecting our moment-to-moment actions, attitudes and long-term achievements. Therefore, the emotional tone in a learning situation is not just an added extra. No one teaches in an emotional vacuum. The teacher who generates a feeling of confidence and success, uses humour and praise, makes learners feel valued and appreciated and amplifies good feelings, is laying down a lasting trace in the emotional memory bank that will stand learners in good stead and make them more resilient when problems occur.

Creating the conditions of coherence between mind and emotions has been shown to improve vision, listening abilities, reaction times, mental clarity, feeling states and sensitivities. The heart also has its own neurotransmitters that send messages to the brain. The study of how to calm the brain through focus on the heart is the core purpose of HeartMath, which uses simple powerful techniques to help people quickly moderate the raging limbic system before damage is done to the self and to others. HeartMath research has identified a measurable physiological state that underlies optimal learning and performance. So the early Egyptians with their focus on the heart rather than the head were not so far off the mark!

Memory enhancement

It is also significant that the limbic system controls not only emotions but memory. Positive emotions play such an important part in transferring learning into long-term memory. If learners find an experience enjoyable they will recall facts more readily. Collaboration, group discussion, active participation, games and quizzes will create a state of positive emotional arousal, releasing a flood of 'pleasure chemicals' that help to 'fix' facts in memory. On the other side of the coin, there is growing evidence of the benefits to be gained from learning to manage stress to increase physiological, mental and emotional coherence. This points to the importance of being able to self regulate emotions. In the light of this new understanding of its critical role in successful learning, emotional intelligence and managing stress should be on the agenda of every programme on learning how to learn.

So we have explored the influence of our emotional state on our ability to absorb new information and how our emotions are part and parcel of our biological inheritance, to keep us from harm and to bind us to others. Our emotions can be a help or a hindrance when we are learning, but by taking steps to improve our emotional awareness we can mitigate their worst effects and maximise their creative power. In the final section, we briefly review developments in the brain sciences through the lens of lifelong learning and look at some of tools and techniques that are being applied successfully.

A magic carpet, a theme park, a pioneering trail

“Good lifelong learning practice takes away those limitations - that people impose on themselves - and provides the new tools, techniques and motivations to learn”. It is especially important that older learners examine critically patterns of limited thinking. Brain research suggests that, as long as a normal brain is not constrained from fulfilling its everyday processes, learning will happen naturally and easily. Harvard education professor Howard Gardner maintains that it is a crucial blunder to assume IQ is a single fixed entity. His contention is that we have a repertoire of skills for solving different kinds of problems in different settings. Using insights from neuroscience (especially the work of Sperry) as well as inspiration from other disciplines, he developed the concept of multiple intelligences. This sees the brain as a kind of multi-dimensional theme park with a range of competences that we can dip into, from the verbal and mathematical to interpersonal and musical. Although we probably have a tendency towards certain styles of thinking that are left brain (logical, sequential, rational, analytic, objective) or right brain (random, intuitive, holistic, synthesizing, subjective), thinking is a whole brain activity. Teachers who foster a whole-brained learning approach use instructions that connect both sides of the brain. Therefore, they incorporate patterning, metaphors, analogies, role-playing, visuals and movement into their reading, calculation and analytical activities.

Awareness of your range of talents or your ‘signature themes’ comes under the rubric of metacognition – learning how to learn. Aspects of metacognition include learning styles linked to Kolb’s learning cycle, identifying your strongest sensory modality (visual, auditory or kinesthetic) and learning practical strategies for reinforcing memory, such as mnemonics or mind mapping. It is crucial to appreciate the value of breaking learning into chunks, with downtime

and rewards for perseverance. Raising awareness of the range of tools to make learning stick, your own learning style and preferences give you an immense head start. Because human actions are goal-oriented, feelings and thoughts about the learning task will send us soaring over obstacles towards success or turn us into plodders. One of the very practical areas of development in this field is the positive psychology of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). This capitalises on the power of positive emotions to energise and release the 'happiness chemicals' that anchor learning in long-term memory. An optimistic outlook with a flexible plan, a vision of a successful outcome and a willingness to use the language of success (no failure only feedback), is like having a magic carpet that will take you where you want to go. With this mind-set, you develop your motivation, your capacity to co-operate, influence those around you for good and create your own success story in your own terms.

Now for the final metaphor – the pioneer trail. This incorporates Einstein's belief that ideas are more important than knowledge. The imaginative brain is not the preserve of the talented few. In whatever roles we find ourselves there are possibilities to make a difference. Ideas often seem to appear from nowhere - from a radio play, a painting, a piece of music and as we grow older we have more time to reflect, to be inspired by the world around us and develop a deeper appreciation of our spiritual and emotional being.

In this paper, we have examined some of reasons that emotions affect the way we see the world and the way we learn. A system that results in great numbers of older people being demotivated by a belief that they have little talent for learning must be challenged. Our brain biology hardwires us to learn throughout life, and by encouraging learners to develop an awareness of their feelings and how the emotional climate affects the ability to learn educators and teachers can lay firmer foundations for success. By using multifaceted teaching strategies to attract individual interests and letting students express their auditory, visual, tactile, or emotional preferences learning in later life will become more attractive and accessible to a much wider range of older people.

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PURPOSES AND MEANINGS OF LEARNING IN LATER LIFE: WHAT LEARNING STORIES CAN CONVEY

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Abstract

Learning is an activity which is rich in personal meanings. It engages the affective as well as the cognitive domain and impacts upon our sense of self and identity. Our retrospective experiences of learning seem to provide a legacy which continues to impact upon learning lives well into later life. Learning trajectories are affected by a complex interplay of formal, non formal and informal opportunities.

This paper is informed by an interpretative, dialogical study which sought to explore and locate nine older participants' perceptions and meanings of learning and education against a background of lifelong learning. Although a topic centred narrative approach was intended, learning could not be conveniently separated from the rest of life and this was evident within the accounts and recollections of the participants. For the purposes of this conference, one of the research questions concerned with the meaning of learning has been chosen.

Very clear distinctions were made by those nine older people between schooling and learning and the value of everyday learning such as interpreting bus timetables, negotiating different voluntary work opportunities and the learning opportunities which could be gained from being with a like minded group. The inherent values of lifelong learning were strongly held by those nine people and the benefits were considered to be increased confidence, mental wellbeing and a means of contributing to the community.

One of the most interesting findings was concerned with the perception that when freed from any instrumental requirement to learn, participants craved learning opportunities and thrived on challenge. They also wished to learn in a group with the opportunity to reflect upon the issues raised. This clearly has ramifications for the type of learning opportunities which are provided.

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CONCEPTIONS OF AGING AND ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING FOR A SAMPLE OF LIFELONG INTELLECTUALLY DISABLED ADULTS.¹

Boulton-Lewis, G.M., Buys, L. & Tedman-Jones, J.

Gillian Boulton-Lewis

Abstract

This paper examines conceptions of ageing and engagement in learning derived from interviews with a sample of 16 older people (52 to 80 years; mean age 62 years) with a lifelong intellectual disability, their care workers and a family member or friend. People chosen for the sample had sufficient verbal skills to participate in the interviews. Half the sample was in Queensland and the other half in Victoria and included participants from urban as well as regional or rural areas. This analysis forms part of a larger program of research to determine a model of active ageing for people who have a lifelong intellectual disability. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using phenomenography to identify conceptions of ageing and a constant comparative method to determine engagement in learning. The focus for this analysis was on the views expressed by the older persons themselves but these were checked against the statements made by carers and family members. A range of semi hierarchical conceptions of ageing was identified, extending from no conception at all, through some limited awareness, awareness of ageing effects, ageing as requiring preparation, to an overall understanding.. Their engagement with learning was classified as Low, Medium or High. Surprisingly, most of the participants were engaged in or wanted to be involved in learning in a range of useful or recreational areas. While different kinds of learning were identified, most learning occurred at a low level, involving observation and copying, rather than through more formalised educational experiences. The relationship between participants' conceptions of learning and engagement in learning are presented and discussed. Although there is some information in the literature about what older people believe constitutes active ageing, very little information exists about active ageing for older people with a lifelong intellectual disability. Hence, some implications concerning learning in the context of active ageing for this group are presented.

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Introduction

This is a description of conceptions of ageing and engagement with learning for with 16 older people (52 to 80 years; mean age 62 years) with a lifelong intellectual disability, care workers and family member/ friend. They had sufficient verbal skills to participate in the interviews. Half were in Queensland and half in Victoria. The data are from research to describe a model of active ageing for people who have a lifelong intellectual disability. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using phenomenography to identify conceptions of ageing and an

inductive determination of engagement with learning. Semi-hierarchical conceptions of ageing were identified including; no conception, limited awareness, awareness of ageing effects, ageing as requiring preparation, and overall understanding. Engagement with learning was classified as Low, Medium or High. Most learning occurred at a low level involving observation and copying rather than formalised education. The relationship between participants' conceptions of and engagement with learning are discussed. Although there is information in the literature about what older people believe constitutes active ageing there is little about active ageing for people with a lifelong intellectual disability.

Background

'Active ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (WHO, World Health Organisation Report, 2002, p2). Older adults in the United States defined successful ageing as multidimensional and including physical, functional, psychological and social health (Phelan, Anderson, LaCroix & Larson, 2004). Neugarten (1974, 1975) discriminated between young-old (55-75 yrs) and old-old (75yrs+). Later (1982) Neugarten suggested that categories should become competent old and frail old, where frail old were those who were vulnerable for physical or social reasons. Neugarten (1966) asserted that there is no single pattern of successful ageing; that individual differences become greater with time; that age is a poor predictor of competence, needs or capacities; and that nevertheless policies are based on age. Jones (2006) found people positioning themselves and talking as if they were not old depending on the focus of the interaction.

Learning is assumed to be important in facilitating participation and allowing older adults to enjoy a positive quality of life (WHO, 2002, p16). For example the ability to solve problems and adapt to change are strong predictors of active ageing and longevity (Smits et al., 1999, cited in WHO (2002, p26). It is clear that learning plays an important role in productive ageing (Ardelt, 2000, Dench & Regan: 2000, Glendennig, 1997; Withnall, 2000) and therefore it is important to understand more about the phenomenon. Boulton-Lewis, Buys, and Lovie-Kitchin (2006) and Boulton-Lewis, Buys, Lovie-Kitchin, Barnett and David (2007) found that older adults are generally interested in learning, women more than men; but men are more likely than women to want to learn about computer technology.

Ageing with a lifelong intellectual disability

There is no doubt that Australia's population is ageing and includes a small but growing group of adults with a lifelong disability (Gething, 1999). Traditionally these individuals were cared for at home or in institutions and there were limited expectations for their engagement with learning. Today most live in the community independently, with family, in group homes or in supported accommodation. Some work or have opportunities for learning and ageing actively.

There is considerable literature regarding quality of life for older people with intellectual disabilities, older people, and older people with disabilities (Thompson, 2002). However there is little research on active ageing and even less on life long learning issues for people with a lifelong disability. Thus the purpose of this article is to explore the relationship between the understanding the concept of ageing and learning for older people with life long intellectual disability.

Method

The overall purpose of the research was to determine the lived experiences of older people with lifelong intellectual disability through case studies and to develop a preliminary model of active ageing.

Sample

Purposive sampling which is particularly useful for locating 'difficult to reach' and 'particular types' of cases for in-depth interviewing was used. Participants were essentially chosen for their 'expertise' (Morse, 1994; Patton, 1990). Service providers of people with lifelong intellectual disability, in two Australian states, were asked to identify service users who had sufficient verbal skills to participate in interviews. Service users then nominated a key informal network member and a service provider.

The sample included 16 service users, 6 men and 10 women, in urban and rural areas. Age ranged from 52 to 80 years (mean 62 years). Service users were either born with an intellectual disability or acquired it during childhood. Ten service users lived in group-home type situations, 3 lived alone and 3 lived with family members. Half the service users were not engaged in work, 5 were still working in supported employment and 3 were in voluntary community work. Those not involved in work, regularly attended some type of day program such as Adult Training Support Services.

Interviews

Service users' lives, hopes and expectations for the future were explored using direct questions and probes. The questions included aspects of getting older, things they did during the day, their future, what stops them from doing what they want, what they needed, and anything else they wanted to talk about. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in locations of participants' choice and lasted from 60 to 90 minutes.

Analysis

Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. A phenomenographical analysis of the transcripts was used to identify conceptions of ageing. Phenomenography is an empirically based qualitative methodology that aims to identify different ways in which a group of people experience a phenomenon (Marton, 1988). It was originally directed towards determining conceptions of learning but has since focussed on other areas. The conceptions are derived from the data and illustrated by excerpts from them. It is usual in phenomenographical research to assist the interviewees to focus on the phenomenon and then encourage them to talk about it. In this research the focus was determined by questions related to aspects of active ageing. Analysis for engagement with learning was inductive to determine the level of engagement with learning.

Results

Conceptions of ageing

Five semi hierarchical categories of ageing were identified. These were; no conception, limited awareness, awareness of ageing effects, ageing as requiring preparation, overall understanding. The categories are semi-hierarchical because the first conception is not subsumed by the higher categories. If a person's highest conception of ageing for example is some limited awareness then they will not also hold category 1 (no conception). Category 4 (requiring preparation) is not necessarily subsumed by category 5.

1. No conception of ageing

This category is characterised by no awareness of ageing or by statements by interviewees that they are not or do not feel old. Some of their family members or carers expressed concerns about the fact that the users were ageing. They worried about the person's health, finances or ongoing

care but the people themselves seem to be blissfully unaware of the phenomenon or effects of ageing.

Int. So you don't worry about getting older?

Q1. No because if I break me arm I can play with me left hand anyway (bowls)

Int. Do you find it hard to do a lot, now you're getting older?

Q5. Nuh, I'm real active.

2. *Limited awareness*

In this category there was mention of one or two relevant aspects of ageing when they were asked about what getting older means.

Q4. I'm getting older, tired, changed the things I do, just keeping on

Q1. Nothing changes but I'm always falling over

3. *Awareness of some effect of ageing*

In this category users were aware of a range of effects of ageing but not fully aware of the idea of getting older and of all these effects being related.

Q3. Another year comes and get older and older ...well walking up stairs is getting too much ... I need glasses for reading, writing and all types of things...

Q4. Life's changed, tired – doctor told him to slow down because he's old

4. *Requiring preparation*

People who held this conception of ageing were not necessarily aware of all the likely effects but were concerned about preparation for where they might live later on, or the need to organise a funeral or place to be buried.

Q7. I like to put my name down for a nursing home later on, you know down the track, because I'm getting on now...I wouldn't be able to get around as well... the staff look after the old people you know. Very caring, they get some exercise and they go out in a bus.

Q. She's already arranged her funeral....she's paying into an insurance fund so much a month and it goes for so many years....she's decided whatever could be surplus from that funeral investment....she wants that to go to (her) church

5. *Overall understanding of ageing*

This category of conception of ageing represents an overall understanding of getting older and its related effects. It is comparative and represents a good understanding of ageing for this group of people with an intellectual disability.

V7. I'm going through the change (menopause), gets me stressed, I could be dead (next year), there's a board over at our centre of people who have died, names...

V8. It's hard for me to get older, I was getting too tired and the mower (work) was getting me tired all the time, I'd like to settle down and keep quiet, I will get old but I'm doing my best to stay...fit

Engagement with learning

A range of learning activities was described in the interviews. These included maintaining ongoing interests or engaging in new ones as detailed in Table 2. We classified engagement with learning as low medium or high for this group of people.

Low engagement (L)

People classified at this level either did not want to learn new things or wanted to maintain one or two existing skills or knowledge. They were mostly content to take part in the regular work activities or those available through service providers

Medium engagement (M)

These people wanted to keep learning in areas that they were familiar with and engage in a little new learning. New areas included improving reading and writing, using the computer, or new skills at work.

High engagement (H)

People at this level wanted to take courses, without necessarily obtaining certification, or keep learning new things.

Relationships between conception of ageing and engagement with learning

The highest category of conception of ageing for each person was cross tabulated with the extent of their engagement with learning. This is presented in detail in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between conception of ageing and engagement with learning

<i>Service user information</i>	<i>Conception of ageing</i>	<i>Engagement with learning and examples</i>
Q1 ² , urban, male, 56, supported independent living, keep working	1	M reading, writing, computer, bowls
Q2, urban, female, 55, lives with husband with support	1	M reads, work skills, bowls
Q3, urban, female, 62, with parents, wants to move	3	L sews, computer minimally, bored
Q4, urban, male, 62, lives with sister, works	2	M trips, more training
Q5, rural, male, 62, lives on institutional farm, wants to live with girlfriend	1	H first aid, forklift, fishing, bike riding, flying!, keep on working
Q6, rural, male, 57, group home	2	L bored, disinterested, deaf
Q7, rural, female, 52, independent living in unit, voluntary work, wants paid work	4	H sews, pets, craft, singing, electronic equipment
Q 8, rural, female, 63, group home, voluntary work	2	M travel, acting, dancing, TV, manages health
V1, urban, female, 58, retirement village	2	L bored, bowls, outings, church
V2, urban, female, 80, group home, used to work	2	L senior activities, sews, knits, holidays, can't read
V3, urban, female, 63, group home	1	L dancing, walking, travel, reads
V4, rural, male, 71, group home	3	L dancing, computer
V5, rural, female, 68, group home works p/t, has boyfriend (V8)	1	M keep up current activities, music, socials, dancing, likes new experiences
V6, female, group home, 68, works p/t, weekly home visit	5	M keep doing same things, music, sewing, gym, walking, outings, new friends

² Each service user was categorised by state (Q for Queensland or V for Victoria) and number.

V7, female, rural, 60, group home, some work, volunteers	5	M gym (hates), bowls, pokies, computer, writing life story, goes out, socialises
V8, male, rural, 69, group home	5	H computers for weather, gardening, learning to read and write, manage money, maintain other activities, bowling, cooking, bike riding, crosswords.

Discussion

The category 1 conception of ageing for some service users is not surprising for at least two reasons. One possibility is that some of the sample was young-old (that is 55-75 years) or competent as opposed to frail old (Neugarten, 1975, 1982) and people in this age group may not think of themselves yet as ageing (Neugarten, 1982, Jones, 2006). Another possibility is that because all of the sample had an intellectual disability, they may not have been aware, that they were passing through life stages such as adulthood, middle age and then becoming old (Verbrugge & Yang, 2002). Category 2 shows that some people have limited awareness of the likely effects of ageing and respond, when asked what getting older means, that they are slowing down, getting tired, or needing to rest more. People with a category 3 conception of ageing listed a series of effects that are related to getting older. A category 4 conception of ageing includes the idea that they must plan to deal with the effects of getting older or plan for their death. Those who hold a Category 5 conception are aware of related effects and consequences of ageing.

There is not a strong pattern of relationships between understanding ageing and engagement with life and learning although there are some interesting paradoxes. For example, most of the people who do not know or do not think that they are ageing (Category 1), have medium to high engagement with learning, as do those (Category 5) who understand ageing quite well. Most of the people who have a low engagement with learning also have limited awareness of ageing (Category 2 or 3). Some of these results are probably influenced by their living arrangements and availability of support. There was no difference between males' and females' engagement with learning except that the males were minimally more active with computers

Conclusion

It seems from this sample that those who do not know that they are ageing or understand the process well, are more likely to engage actively with life and learning. This may or may not be the case with the general population and it would be interesting to investigate the possibility.

Our data also suggest that interesting activities are important and that there should be choice about new and continuing possibilities. It is not good enough to have one activity for all. People ageing with intellectual disabilities have developed varied interests and abilities just as everyone else does. Also it cannot be assumed that older adults with an intellectual disability really know that they are getting older. However, whether they have this awareness or not does not seem to matter in terms of active engagement with learning and life. What is important is that they are encouraged to be as active as their situation and disabilities allow.

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OLDER ADULT UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES (OAUPS) IN SPAIN: A SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGE IN THE CONTEXT OF LIFELONG LEARNING

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Abstract

Forty-seven universities currently offer OAUPS in Spain. 31 of them belong to AEPUM (<http://www.aepumayores.org>), which represents the public and private higher education institutions that have developed specific university-level teaching programmes for over-50s following the lifelong learning approach. These teaching programmes, which date back to the 1990s and do not exclusively pursue professionally-oriented goals, emerge within the university context with the following priority objectives: personal development; removal of technological and cultural barriers for the senior population; and encouragement of an active citizenship through lifelong learning. The universities that have met this social demand within their educational policy have started a joint, shared task to unify efforts with the objective of converging in academic and quality aspects related to these teaching programmes.

The result of this effort has been the AEPUMA³ project, within which a significant effort has been made to analyse and evaluate these teaching programmes. 19 universities have been involved in this research project, which has reviewed the reality of these programmes in Spain at all levels, i.e. sociological, academic (contents, methodology and assessment), administrative and financial, and has ultimately led to specific proposals for the regulation of these programmes by the Ministry of Education, at a time during which the Reform of the Organic Law of Universities is under way, and in which universities are immersed into the convergence processes foreseen within the EHES.

The analysis, conclusions and proposals have been structured in these headings, which are those brought to this International Conference on Learning in Later Life:

- *The aging of Spanish population. Sociodemographic analysis and specific training demands of older adults.*
- *Current state of events in the training of older adults in Spain.*
- *The internationalisation of this training as a consolidation factor within the university framework and on the path towards European convergence.*
- *Legal proposals in Spain for the regulation and consolidation of teaching programmes for over-50s.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The first Older Adult University Programmes (OAUPS) started operating in Spain at the beginning of the 90's. Nowadays there are 53 universities and serve over 25,000 students over 50 years. This socio-educative phenomenon has developed specific characteristics in Spain and its development has been carried out thanks to the cooperation between universities and social

services in national encounters (9) and research projects. In February 2004 the official establishment of the *Asociación Estatal de Programas Universitarios para Mayores (AEPUM⁴)*—National Association of University Programmes for Older Adults— took place in the MECD (Ministry of Education) offices. 31 universities (58% of those offering OAUPs in Spain) currently form part of AEPUM. The recently approved reform of LOU has promoted an ultimate effort in order to regulate those teaching programmes from the educational system.

Within this framework the AEPUMA⁵ Project was presented to this call under the direction of the University of Alicante and with the participation of 19 universities in all that represents 13 autonomous communities and analyse the situation in 31 Spanish universities and 5 international institutions.

With a previous approach from our territorial, administrative and sociological reality, the project objectives have been: a) checking the educational levels of the citizens who demand these studies; b) evaluating the new educational needs of the senior population in Spain; c) explaining the present reality of older adult university training in Spain in the areas of academic contents, methodology and teaching, management, infrastructure financing, technical and teaching resources, evaluation and results of the actions regarding students and the impact on the social context; d) analysing the existing older adult training models; e) proposing answers to the potential demand of seniors in the future, within the framework of the European Higher Education Space and lifelong learning, defined in the declarations of the Sorbonne (1998), Bologna (1999) and the Prague communiqué (2001). f) providing the Universities that offer these studies with a management and research tool that can allow them to systematise the information they generate. It all has as its aim to determine the strengths and weaknesses and the lines for improvement of OAUPs and offer suggestions for their development and consolidation by the competent socioeducational institutions.

The assessment of the meaning of this project could be summarised in several aspects: a) basic research; b) development of specific management research instruments for the future (INTRANET AEPUMA); and c) applied research to OAUPs.

II- A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY: AGEING OF THE SPANISH POPULATION AND SPECIFIC DEMANDS FOR OLDER ADULT TRAINING

2.1 SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE SENIOR POPULATION

The successive achievement of a greater life expectancy has caused the accelerated increase of the percentage of senior citizens over 65 years of age in Spain, which has passed from 5 % of the population in 1900 to 20 % in 2005. This fact, which is very positive on an individual level, is clearly perverse on a social level because it brings about serious demographic, economic, social and welfare-related and cultural problems, such as: demographic exhaustion due to the absence of a generational replacement, an increased volume of the dependent passive population, increase of welfare-related expenses, prevalence of a conservative mentality, loss of quality of life. This new sociodemographic situation additionally makes it necessary for social policies to stop the classical assignment of activities to the different age groups: education for children and young people, work for the adult age and leisure for the old age.

⁴ All the information about national encounters, previous work at universities, background and the constitution of AEPUM can be found at www.AEPUMayores.org

⁵ Analysis and Evaluation of OAUPs. Call: National Programmes of Technologies for Health and Welfare and for Social, Economic and Legal Sciences. National Plan for Scientific Research, Development and Technological Innovation (2004-2007).

Table 1 - Spain, 1900-2001: Distribution of the population by large group ages.**Source: INE (Spain's National Statistics Institute)**

Years	Under 15	Between 15 and 64	Over 64
1900	33.5	61.2	5.2
1930	31.7	62.2	6.1
1960	27.4	64.4	8.2
1981	25.6	63.1	11.3
2001	14.5	68.5	20.0

Life expectancy in Spain is situated at 78 years for males and 83.5 for females. Old age is now more important in socio-demographic terms than it used to be because, at 65 years of age, a person still has 23% of his/her life to live. Therefore, there will be a need to redefine the concept of leisure for the old age and fill it with content to fruitfully occupy the period between the sixty and eighty-odd years that average Spanish citizens currently have as their life expectancy. This population group will represent 30% of the population in 2030 and in 2050 (42,5%).

Table 2 - Spain, 1991-2005. Percentages of population over a certain age.**Source: Elaborated by the authors with INE data**

AGE GROUP	BOTH SEXES			MALES			FEMALES		
	Census	Census	Register	Census	Census	Register	Census	Census	Register
	1991	2001	2005	1991	2001	2005	1991	2001	2005
Over 80	3.0	3.9	4.3	2.1	2.7	3.0	3.8	5.0	5.6
Over 70	9.1	11.9	12.4	7.2	9.8	10.2	11.0	14.0	14.6
Over 60	19.2	21.6	21.5	16.9	19.1	19.0	21.5	24.0	24.0
Over 50	30.1	32.9	33.1	27.6	30.5	30.6	32.4	35.3	35.6

Summing up, the quantitative ageing of the population is a new reality that requires important cultural, social and welfare-related changes. There will be a greater number of senior citizens, with ages above seventy-five, who after their retirement, want to remain integrated into society with a better quality of life, for which they will demand more services, as well as education and new forms of social participation.

Thus, from the analysis it can be deduced that people over 65 years of age (which may represent up to 30% of the population by 2030) live in their own home, with their spouses, children and relatives. And they want to keep this autonomous form of life to which the vast majority of the Spanish population aspires.

Table 3 - Comparative study of training levels between 16 and 65+ years of age

	Illiterate	Incomplete Primary Studies	Primary Studies	Lower Secondary Education	Upper Secondary Education	Higher Studies
16-24	0.1%	1%	9%	41%	35%	14%
25-34	0.5%	1%	8%	30%	23%	38%
35-44	1%	3%	13%	33%	21%	29%
45-54	2%	7%	35%	25%	28%	28%
55-64	5%	15%	45%	16%	8%	11%
>65	10%	27%	45%	7%	4%	7%

Age is shown as a limiting factor for the educational level. Age increases the percentage of illiterates, of citizens who have not completed their primary studies; who have completed their primary studies, who have completed the lower secondary education age and who have finished the upper secondary education stages, or who have done higher studies. The indices from 65 years of age onwards show these extremes more distinctly, (as can be seen in Table 3). The discrimination in the access to education for reasons of gender in Spain has been another essential issue among the socio-demographic factors resulting from the analysis.

Table 4 - Sex-based comparative analysis of educational levels. Source: INE 2004.

	Illiterates	Incomplete Primary	Primary St	Lower Second Ed.	Upper Second Ed.	Higher S.
Males	6%	24%	46%	8%	5%	8%
Females	12%	29.5%	46%	6%	2.5%	3%

2.2 POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR LEARNING

The Potential Demand for Learning (PDL) would be formed by the whole population between 16 and 64 years of age. However, if the population over 65 years of age is included in this projection, PDL figures increase considerably (see Table 5).

Table 5 - Projection of the Potential Demand learning (Spain 2006-2026)

Year	16-64 years No. of inhabts - / %	>65 years No. of inhabts - / %	Total Population
2006	29,707,832 – 67.5 %	7,404,260 – 16.8 %	43,995,007
2016	31,109,452 – 65.1 %	8,857,956 – 18.5 %	47,780,709
2026	31,967,404 – 63.5 %	10,876,681 – 21.6 %	50,287,317

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We can mention that at present, citizens over 50 years of age (the addresses of older adult university programmes) represent one third of the country's total population (33.1 %) and, therefore, their number largely exceeds the figures corresponding to the Spanish schools and university population and this demand will grow even more in the next few years. However, the present challenge consists also in understanding that a small investment made in their education today may bring substantial savings in terms of attention to dependency and healthcare tomorrow, to which must be added that we start realising that it is an all-important sector in the creation of specialised jobs⁶.

It is obvious that no National Dependency System can assume the expenditure related to dependency on its own (without the support of other policies). Educational policies become essential in a preventive system and undoubtedly constitute a palliative solution to ageing symptoms in the country that ages the most in all Europe. Nowadays in Spain the Law for the Promotion of Personal Autonomy and the Attention to Dependants has just come into effect, two key aspects make that role of university training even more relevant: Promotion of Personal Autonomy and Prevention of dependency (that will affect to 7,000,000 seniors over 65 years old).

⁶ Ministry of Work and Social Affairs, State Office for Social Services, Families and Disability (Seniors and Social Services Institute (IMSERSO)) (2006). The National Dependency System, evaluation of its effects on employment, Synthesis report, Madrid.

The UN Instrumental Action Plan on Ageing, as well as all the other European, national and regional programmes, plans and actions based on it support the execution of the OAUPs. The research undertaken within the AEPUMA Project has revealed from various sections related to ageing and cognitive functioning, learning potential, cognitive activity and everyday life as well as images of seniors that they have enough cognitive resources to follow University Programmes for Seniors. Recent research works have even proved that they have positive effects on health and cognitive functioning itself.

III- THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS IN TRAINING FOR SENIORS IN SPAIN.

3.1 THE UNIVERSITIES FOR OLDER ADULTS AND THEIR SPECIFIC TRAINING NEEDS.

The present scenario is characterised by a massive presence of University Programmes for Seniors, all of them linked to public and private universities. This offer is differentiated from others as can be the *Universidades Populares* (Popular Universities), *las Aulas de la Tercera Edad*⁷ (Third-Age Classrooms), o *Educación Permanente de Adultos*, (Permanent Adult Education). The differentiation is established, among other reasons by their academic organisation, by the study-linked research and by its international projection.

Traditionally universities have been associated with “lifelong learning” in the strict sense of continuous learning, i.e. with a professionalising nature and particularly focused on constantly updating technological, scientific and educational innovation. However, for some time now, some universities have adopted a concept of lifelong education and learning aimed at improving the quality of life of older adults and promoting their participation in their immediate social environment. Yet, if university wants to play a key role in the creation of a lifelong learning culture, it must start by rethinking the structures that define and rule our current learning processes. University should not only offer efficient, appropriate and coherent learning opportunities according to the needs of society, thus building a learning “continuum” from undergraduate to lifelong and post-graduate education, but also contribute to lay the foundations that allow for the development of a society that is learning non-stop. University, as an institution, must become a “lifelong learning community”.

The transformation into genuine lifelong learning institutions requires a holistic approach that: a) supports society and its institutions, so that they can become true lifelong learning communities by themselves; b) includes academic, financial and administrative elements; c) provides structures responsible for the development of organisational, team, student and curriculum matters, and for the community commitment, and d) fine-tunes the different support structures to the new mission that universities will have in the learning and knowledge societies.

The universities and the Older Adult University Programmes (OAUPs) have met this demand and opened the doors to older adults in a more institutionalised way offering several specific programmes, which are not considered “exclusive” or competitive, but complementary to the existing programmes. To sum up, a new space for university education with a global character and aimed at older adults has been created. It is a type of learning that has nothing to do with “professionalisation” or “competitiveness” in the labour market, although one cannot rule out this possibility depending on the dynamics and changes that the labour market and the social context themselves may go through.

3.2. FEATURES OF UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES FOR OLDER ADULTS.

⁷ AEPUMA project, 2007. page 124.

3.2.1. Unity and diversity of the OAUPs in Spain.

Universities are legally “autonomous”⁸ and have financial nature. It is therefore that each university, complying with the minimum legal requirements established, has approved different curricula. However, OAUPs can be defined as the learning offer, preferably aimed at people over 50, which are organised by universities, which do not fall within informal education, and are in tune with the proposals of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission (2001) regarding their guidelines about lifelong learning. We are talking about the two most important modalities of learning programmes: a) Formal programmes: organised by specialised learning institutions (universities in our case), which are complemented by b) Non-formal programmes: that have a learning purpose and some sort of structure, but were not set up by universities or any other learning or training centre, instead they were founded by groups of people and non-specialised institutions (alumni associations, entities and trusts) that complement the formal programme with activities out of or in cooperation with universities.

Among the 31 programmes analysed stand out some common facts and defining traits.

3.2.2. Social and learning aims:

- Improving quality of life through knowledge and relationships that are established in the university environment in order to facilitate adaptation to technological changes and socio-cultural integration.
- Promoting the development of intergenerational relationships, thus enabling the transfer of knowledge and attitudes through experience.
- Developing the setting-up of volunteering opportunities in cooperation with Social Services and the Community Services, as well as with other institutions.
- Encourage the development of Associationism, both in university and out-of-university fields.
- Providing university education that facilitates the development of self-learning.
- Disseminating, widen or update knowledge and culture amongst older adults.
- Promoting better knowledge of the surrounding area to obtain more benefits from society’s leisure offer (cultural, physical, intellectual...).
- Favouring personal development of skills and values amongst older adults from the perspective of lifelong learning.
- Facilitating access to other university studies to those people who, after participating in specific older adult education, can demonstrate sufficient training and knowledge to pursue them.

Finally, it must be brought to light that these programmes have different names, according to these general aims, such as: *University of Experience* (the most widely used), *University for Older Adults*, *Permanent University*, and *Senior University*. A more detailed relation of these universities can be checked up at www.aepumayores.org.

3.2.3. Institutionalisation of aims and structures of the Universities for Older Adults.

Regarding the institutional framework, we are dealing with Higher Education Learning Programmes, considered even in some universities as one of the University’s Own Degree Programmes, put forward by a university (public/private) acting as an Institution as defined by the Organic Act on Universities (LOU), in its article 34 approved by its corresponding governing bodies, directed and coordinated by teams appointed by the university, the university being

⁸ (Article 27.10 of the Constitution –B.O.E./ Spanish Official Gazette of 29 December 1978- and Article 2 of the Organic Act on Universities 6/2001 of 21 December–B.O.E./ Spanish Official Gazette of 24 December-)

responsible for its development, follow-up, assessment, reform and updating. These programmes are also organised according to the following criteria:

1. They have a well-established Curriculum, if possible including a clear specification of how the different diplomas offered are organised into and linked to the corresponding Knowledge Areas.
2. Their length is established in relation to the academic year, setting the programme's starting and finishing times according to the university calendar.
3. The programme's presentation is complete and thorough, containing different years and levels and including specification of the correct total hours (minimum and maximum) pre-established per academic year.
4. They assess the level of competence acquired by the students, by using the different common procedures of the university context, taking into account the characteristics of the students. It can never be a mere assistance programme.
5. They guarantee a learning level that must be recognised by the university itself, thus awarding the appropriate diploma (particularly University's Own Degree Programmes, article 34.3 of the LOU, if possible, with the academic acknowledgement that allows students to access all other university programmes).

3.2.4. Academic structure and learning framework.

The general and specific aims are fulfilled by several structures of university bodies and services, most of them, within the institutional field of Vice-Rectorates for University Extension, Post-graduate Studies or the Faculty of Science of Education. The basic structure focuses on the following issues:

- The General Curriculum usually has a length of several undergraduate courses (around 75% of the universities are organised according to conventional academic years, three years to be completed by students with reduced course options), regardless of having the possibility, or not, of going into a "second cycle" of postgraduate or specialisation studies in a particular field or itinerary (two more years), with more curricular flexibility.
- Sessions are also distributed within the conventional academic calendar.
- The programme includes subjects distributed according to knowledge areas, thus giving the university departments and centres a convenient key role by the inclusion of the corresponding learning and methodological patterns.
- It provides for the necessary support in terms of facilities, administrative and academic services, and takes care of the assessment of students, teachings and programmes.
- It is complemented by the activities of the University Extension and practice that include workshops and work seminars.
- It maintains and favours active participation of students in the programmes by means of the students associations and representatives belonging to those studies.
- Coordination the learning options from a specific centre with academic and scientific capabilities, international cooperation and researching are characteristics that defines it.
- The Programmes' Contents: related to the Humanities and Social Sciences clearly stand out from the rest. In addition, their percentages are the most regular of all the programmes. Most OAUPs are very similar in this respect. ICT and language-related contents, appear as cross-curricular themes in OAUPs and as optional instrumental subjects and complementary activities.

3.2.5. Physical facilities and teaching staff.

The programmes analysed take place within the university premises, where the infrastructures of the university (faculties, departments, classrooms) are at the older adults' disposal without any type of discrimination, thus favouring the interaction between younger and older students. The teaching responsibility of these programmes falls on all the different types of university teaching

staff, exactly like in the rest of university programmes. However, it is common for the teaching staff to work together with other experts and people whose knowledge and merits may be useful to teach older adults.

Universities, generally speaking, prefer to organise the teaching offer of these programmes from their own structure and, to a much lesser extent, utilise external resources. This can be seen as a sort of institutional implication on these programmes, although the teaching services provided are not usually included in the General Plan of Teaching Organisation of most universities. Instead, they belong to activities described as University Extension or Specialisation courses paid separately. This situation is a consequence of these programmes not being official and students not being funded by the general educational system.

3.2.6. Students and access requirements.

The most general access requirement is age; being over 55 is a necessary condition for around 58% of the programmes. In some cases (6%), this requirement goes up to 60 years of age. In other cases (32%), it is reduced to being 50 or just below 50, whereas some (4%) have not established an age requirement. Several programmes included additional access requirements, thus somehow reflecting different social definitions of “being old”, such as the fact of being retired or not performing a paid job, a condition required at 14% of the OAUPs. Others (11%), demand a prior level of education (always very basic), and a final group (16%) have an access test that must be passed before registering.

With regard to the reasons why older adults wish to access OAUPs, one must point out the following: broaden their knowledge, undertake cultural activities in their free time, personal development and fulfilment and specific interest for the programmes’ contents.

Students attending the OAUPs have very different backgrounds related to the social and demographic characteristics of each region. On the whole, we have relatively young students, particularly for the age cohort of 55 to 64 years old, whose group has the highest number of participants. There are also a larger group of women (see Table 6) with an education level above the older population average. We assume that there are even some programmes in which the percentage of university graduates is 52% (Bachelor/ Master).

Table 6 - OAUP students by gender and age (general percentages) (n=1199)

Years	Male	Female	Both
55-59	8.8	17.8	26.6
60-64	10.4	19.5	29.9
65-69	7.5	13.6	21.1
70-74	5.1	7.8	12.9
75-79	2.9	4.9	7.8
80-84	0.7	0.6	1.3
85 and over	0.1	0.3	0.4
All	35.5	64.5	100.0

Source: INE, Advance of the Register of 1 January 2005

There are high percentages of single, widow, separate or divorced women that live alone and attend these programmes, which reinforces the view that women were historically excluded on the grounds of gender when accessing university education in Spain. Most of the students had paid jobs and, although they are relatively young, they are retired or early retired. OAUP students’ income level is clearly higher than the income of the average citizen. These data

confirm the existence of programmes within a particular context linked to historical processes of marginalisation and social isolation. However, its quick development is connected to other dimensions of the social structure such as gender issues and socioeconomic status.

3.2.7. Funding

OAUPs have different types of funding depending on the Autonomous Regions and the universities. In general, there is a mixed budget which mainly depends on the funding gathered by means of student fees (which symbolically cover between 10 to 25% of the learning costs) and the contribution made by the Autonomous Governments (Departments for Education or Social Services). In most cases, universities provide the general facilities and services, which are shared by the rest of the students too. This means that the university provides help directly to the programmes and not through specific funding. In more extreme cases, there are programmes whose funding comes from several public and private institutions (banks, trusts, town councils, universities, regional or central governments and student fees).

3.3. RESEARCH, INTERNATIONALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AUTONOMOUS GROUPS AS DEFINING TRAITS OF OAUPs IN ONGOING LEARNING.

When we talk about university programmes for older adults, we must have a clear picture of the features that make them so specific (but not “exclusive”), within the field of older adult education. The current situation in Spain does not have anything in common with the “first generation” programmes (which were cultural programmes in their spare time, the aim of which was to entertain and favour social relationships between older people) and “second generation” programmes (characterised by learning activities meant to improve participation and knowledge of older adults so that they could contribute to solve existing social problems). We are talking about “third or fourth generation” programmes, since some universities have gone up to a level where they already have formal education programmes put forward by the Education Science Department. These programmes have all the formal features of university education, and have even incorporated students into projects and research teams and international networks linked to educational innovation projects. In our country, these features can only be possible within these formal structures and linked to knowledge areas and university research and teaching departments.

The new international perspective added to OAUPs has favoured an intercultural, global, interdisciplinary and comparative integration in recent years, in terms of teaching, research and University Extension. It additionally implies that all the participants gain an enriching experience thanks to the intercultural contacts taking place; new curricular and methodological innovations being introduced, and the exchange of international knowledge and experiences being promoted, thus providing results that benefit all the academic systems involved.

3.4. THE CONSTRAINTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSOLIDATION OF OAUPs.

Although the benefits of continuous learning and the OAUPs are obvious, there are still all sorts of snags and obstacles hindering the international scope, amongst which stand out those with a regulatory, institutional, funding-related and structural nature. We could stress the following threatening facts to its development:

- These programmes are seen by many older adult citizens as very similar in their structure to conventional universities, which puzzles those who regard university as an inaccessible and elitist institution.

- There is another percentage of older adults who do not see any advantages in this specific learning since students do not obtain an Official Diploma, but an Academic Certificate for the acquired learning that does not qualify them to carry out the professional activity, which is what they are interested in due to the big effort made at their age.
- In this respect, the Spanish learning legislation on University Education does not envisage the possibility of older adults accessing university, unless they pass the University-Access Test for Students Older than 25 and want to study an official graduate or postgraduate course. The only learning actions for older adults with non-professional aims are OAUPs, but conceived from the University Extension and generally limited to people between 50 and 55 years of age.
- The lack of regulations and of a widely-spread recognition of this type of teachings and programmes results in each particular university determining, according to its own institutional initiatives, the significance, structure, resources, staff and facilities of each university programme. The lack of a regulatory framework for OAUPs means that most of the programmes in Spain and other EU-countries are excluded from and cannot take part in many of the research schemes and the academic cooperation at an international level within the European and international support networks, because they cannot benefit from the general funding and support channels available to formal studies of the European Higher Education Space (EHES).
- The perspective of lifelong learning, from the point of view of OAUPs, bears no much relation to the proposals made by several national and international organisations and institutions, where a utilitarian and market-oriented view of knowledge prevails, a view that is more focused on training a qualified workforce than on carrying out an educational project for the people and furthering personal development.

IV- THE NEED OF SETTING UP RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR OLDER ADULT UNIVERSITY PROGRAMMES WITHIN THE REFORM FRAMEWORK OF THE LOU AND THE EHES.

Although the above-mentioned constraints do exist, the number of students that attend these types of university courses is growing year after year and, taking into the account the population's life expectancy, it is possible that this steady increase of students will not stop, so that when people get to know their benefits, the social demand will grow, without having prepared the necessary resources and means for such demand.

This is one of the most solid reasons justifying the need for a regulatory model and the development of OAUPs, but it is also necessary to mention and reflect upon the influence of the Recommendations and Opinions of the European Commission and the Council of Europe that although they are not binding in secondary community legislation; they contain appeals to observe specific ways of conduct and establish official positions.

The new social prospects of older adults have triggered an academic answer from university, an answer that, for years, has been regulated taking into account the sources of the legal system, as stated in section 1.1. of the Spanish Civil Code. Consequently, customs and general legal principles have had a bigger influence on the regulation than the actual law. One must point out that common law tries to fulfil a need unforeseen by the legislator. This means we are talking about the *praeter legem* scenario- customs that regulate situations lacking all kinds of legislation. For several years, older adult university education was only developed as a result of social impetus and lacked *opinio iuris*- opinion to create laws. However, it is a proven fact that this is a historical moment with the necessary social and learning features, as well as the legal qualities of imperativeness, coercibility and generality to make OAUPs an object of legal regulation⁹.

⁹ AEPUMA Project 2007 Page 453

AEPUMA tries to show the interaction between the legal framework and the learning situation, thus providing an answer to the constant need for setting the foundations of this reality and securing its future, which has been repeatedly expressed by several universities and social sectors.

The legal regulation will not only facilitate its consolidation and spread, but will also allow us to discover the network of physical, symbolic and even emotional relationships which operate on the daily life of these learning programmes and will have a considerable bearing on the behaviour and formal and informal strategies of all the people who play a part in universities. Once it was confirmed that these programmes needed a legal regulation and the opportunity was there, the project was aimed at making an appropriate legal proposal including fundamental elements¹⁰ that may contribute to give the necessary institutional impetus to Older Adult Programmes.

The need for lifelong learning and for adapting to the knowledge and information society in which we live has been recognised at an international level, these proposals put forward the fundamental criteria of continuous learning within the university framework:

- a) These programmes are aimed at opening up university to a population sector that is steadily increasing and democratising knowledge.
- b) They are aimed at improving the education, learning and cultural level of this population to allow them to continue taking part in the specific community they belong to, and in the society as a whole, and at promoting interpersonal and intergenerational relationships.
- c) Although these programmes are academic and/or learning-oriented in their nature, taking part in them makes older adults remain very active, which implies a better overall quality of life, especially regarding physical and mental health. Significantly improved are illnesses related to or derived from loneliness, such as depression, thus reducing the future dependence of this group and giving them more autonomy.
- d) These programmes will only achieve academic recognition and validity with a non-professionalising diploma that will open up a new way to access formal university education (to undergraduate studies, or Bachelor degrees and the first cycles of current Master degrees) to a minority of interested people.
- e) They will be specific to this age group, which means that they will be exclusively designed and aimed at people over 50 or 55.
- f) To sum up, it is all about regulating a series of programmes that have a growing demand on the part of the population involved and meet a social need. Their regulation will allow for certain stability and future prospects that are not subject to the political or economic whims or arbitrariness of universities.

In this respect, we believe that it is a common task of all EU member states to carry out parallel, coordinated actions in this field so that the EHES does not exclude this population group, which is not an isolated case, and, as has been previously stated, centralises and characterises the social and demographic reality of Europe's future.

(English-speaking contact: Nuria Ruiz [nuria.ruiz@ua.es])

¹⁰ Regulatory Proposal contained in the AEPUMA Project 2007- page 469.

TWO LEARNING CAMPAIGNS IN INDIA.

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Abstract

This workshop will describe the Total Literacy Campaign launched in a District of Kerala, India, in 1989. Although open to all who could neither read nor write, the expected (and actual) target group consisted of older people, particularly women, who had not had the chance to go to school in early life. I shall describe the way the campaign was publicised and the method of teaching. Formal evaluation showed that the campaign failed overall to make any lasting impact. The people who did retain literacy, however, were older Muslim women with relatives working in the Gulf. The reasons for this success and the general failure will be explained. The paper will end with a short account of a current campaign to teach people to use computers and the Internet. It transpires that the demand for such a programme came precisely from older Muslim women who wanted to communicate easily with their relatives in the Gulf, and that they have participated well.

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Introduction

The first point to make is that the term ‘illiteracy’ is routinely used in India by academics, activists and lay people alike. It is not used to stigmatise individuals but to encapsulate the fact that they cannot read or - more specifically, write – in any language. It is not universally believed that ‘illiterates’ lack good oral communication skills, mental arithmetic, general knowledge or the ability to think and participate in community and political activities. So to label someone as ‘illiterate’ is basically a statement of fact: s/he cannot write. This term, therefore, is used in this paper.

In 1989 Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi inaugurated the Indian Total Literacy Campaign in sixty Districts. The chosen District in Kerala was Ernakulam but its aims differed from those of other Districts. Kerala has long had the highest literacy rate in India (estimated at 70 per cent in 1981) and this increased steadily thanks to universal primary education, but by the late 1980s there were still substantial numbers of illiterates. Many, but not all, of these were older women from the poorer social strata. The Left government of Kerala aimed to attain total literacy, defined as ninety-five per cent (Professor V Reghu, Centre for Adult Continuing Education and Extension, University of Kerala, interview, 2005), by eradicating residual illiteracy, particularly in older people, and reaching marginalised people.

The campaign was to be in three phases. The first would provide basic literacy through the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC). This ran alongside other campaigns to improve the quality of life, including immunisation, family planning, environmentalism and many others. Following this there was to be a Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) in which neo-literates could consolidate their learning. The third phase would be continuing education (CE).

More details can be found at www.gla.ac.uk/kerala.

The Kottayam pilot

Before the main campaign began a pilot was set up in the town of Kottayam. This is well known as a Christian town: in Kottayam District as a whole 46 per cent of the population are Christian (Rajan 2000), against 19 per cent in Kerala as a whole. This was already the most literate town in India, and the numbers involved were quite small (some 2,000, excluding people with learning difficulties and severe addiction problems). The great majority were older people who had had no chance to go to school. Many of the strategies developed there were replicated in the Ernakulam campaign, so it is worth reviewing in some detail. The main source for this is Alphons (1996) and the interview he gave me in 2005.

The campaign, known as the People's Education and Literacy Campaign, Kottayam (PELCK), was headed by the District Collector, a member of the Indian Administrative Service but also a native of Kottayam. This was Mr K J Alphons himself, a man of enormous energy and enthusiasm. In addition to municipal officials, voluntary organisations (the Kerala Shastra Sahitya Parishad [KSSP – People's Science Movement] and the Kerala Association for Non-Formal Education and Development [KANFED]) played an important role and the majority of tutors were volunteers, specially trained for the campaign by the KSSP. These were mainly women, and most were from the poor neighbourhoods in which they were to teach. Volunteers were expected to have had ten years of education but high motivation could qualify too and in one case an eight-year-old girl taught her eighty-year-old grandmother.

A one-day survey into literacy and living standards was carried out to discover who should be targeted for the campaign. This was carried out by National Student Service (NSS) volunteers. They used a questionnaire that elicited details of income, housing, health and illness, cultural activities, amenities and information about the members of the household. Those who claimed to be literate were asked to write and calculate numbers. Those who resisted attempts to get them to attend literacy classes – about half – were visited in their homes by NSS volunteers, municipal councillors, psychologists, sociologists and even by Mr Alphons himself. The result was that in the end everyone agreed.

Publicity was a very important aspect. For example, a literacy flag was hoisted in every ward and brought down only when all the inhabitants had become literate. Ideas for promoting the campaign came mainly from the grassroots, in particular, from the KSSP. One outcome was that literacy became a fashionable cause, even in high society. Means included music, drama, dance, painting, folk arts and poetry, performed in slums and at street corners. Some wards subsequently set up their own choirs singing literacy songs. All the newspapers in Kerala were asked to give a quarter of a page a day to the campaign; newspaper correspondents were stationed in Kottayam; television and radio were used to advertise the campaign; subsequently newspapers across Kerala reported on the campaign, relating 'the agony and ecstasy of those who refused to learn and those who started learning' (Alphons 1996, p. 67). Churches, temples and mosques were enlisted; and the Collector visited the villages to persuade people that, even though Kottayam already had a high level of literacy, the campaign was worthwhile.

Basic reading, writing and calculation were to be learned in a hundred days, followed by a six-month consolidation phase. The original idea was to run literacy classes in central locations in each area of the town, but this was soon found to be inappropriate. The learners were so heterogeneous - for example, in terms of degrees of oral facility or numeracy - that each had to be taught individually, starting from where s/he was. Keralites also have a proud reputation of being individualistic. Some were too shy to attend and received private teaching instead, though after a time, some of these willingly attended classes in their neighbours' houses. As a result of these factors, the 'each one teach one' method was used. This meant that tutors had to base their

teaching techniques on the needs of each learner; in addition, people's own lives were used as teaching material.

After the official end of the campaign teaching continued for another six months and most of the learners were then able to read and write independently (Alphons 1996, p. 75). The official result was that 2,208 people became literate. In addition to gaining basic literacy, 'these illiterate people, mostly in the slums, instead of being anonymous creatures whom even the postman did not recognise' became celebrities whose stories were told in newspapers throughout the state. They developed self-respect and a feeling of importance at contributing to a common goal' (Alphons 1996, p. 77).

The Ernakulam District campaign

Following the Kottayam campaign, the aim was to achieve total literacy in one district by the International Literacy Year of 1990 (Parmeswaran 1998). The first district chosen in Kerala was Ernakulam because, like Kottayam, it already had a high literacy rate (seventy-seven per cent according to the 1981 Census) and so would prove a useful model on a district scale. It followed the model of the Kottayam campaign in many ways – the initial survey, the great emphasis on publicity, the involvement of voluntary organisations, the use of mainly female volunteer tutors and the teaching methods used.

It differed in some ways, however. It was not compulsory to be surveyed or to join classes – but the social pressure to do so was intense and very hard to resist. The main groups targeted were Muslim housewives, poor people, scheduled castes (SC), tribal people, fisherfolk and Tamil migrant workers. Of those tested at the end of the Ernakulam campaign in 1991, the biggest group were Muslims (about one-third), followed by SC, Ezhavas (formerly untouchables), Latin Catholics and SC Christian converts. Over half (55 per cent) had never been to school. Just over half (51 per cent) came from families with at least one literate member. A number of learners had previously attended school for more than five years (Tharakan 2000, pp 45-58, *passim*). Non-Malayalam-speaking people were taught to read and write in their own language (Franke 1999).

Teaching took place where the people were and at times convenient to them, in consultation with the learners, and aimed to be inclusive irrespective of disability such as leprosy. Since many learners were elderly it was soon discovered that some could not see to read so second-hand glasses were collected and matched by forty specially trained volunteers to those who needed them - in one Muslim district more than 50,000 pairs were donated over two months following a public appeal. On average each person received 150 hours of education at a cost of about \$26 per head (Franke & Chasin 1995).

People were tested partly by being asked to write a letter about what they felt about the literacy campaign. A similar test was used in the follow-up (post-literacy) campaign and also in some other parts of India. In other words, people were tested for functional, not merely technical, literacy. The campaign organisers claimed a success rate of 98.34 per cent (Tharakan 2000) and the district's literacy rate was declared to have risen to 96 per cent (Franke & Chasin 1995). In fact, although 135,000 people scored 80 per cent or more on the final test, 39,000 failed it and the overall pass rate was just over 91 per cent (Tharakan 2000). Even those who failed the test, however, had gained some literacy skills. Better still, it was reported that the newly literate started writing letters to the Collector, demanding paved roads and hospitals. Ernakulam district was declared totally literate in February 1990 (Franke & Chasin 1995).

The 1990 external evaluation, conducted with a sample of learners, found that the campaign had been successful in teaching literacy, numeracy and knowledge of local institutions but not in

raising social and critical consciousness (Tharakan 2000). This could be because these were not part of the learners' aims and were low in the hierarchy of their needs.

Case study: Mulavukadu grama panchayat¹¹ (informants: Mr Kaladharan and Advocate Haridas, who worked on the campaign)

It was often reported that the target age range was fifty to sixty, but in fact there was no age limit and learners ranged from thirty to well over sixty. Older people, however, formed the majority, and ninety per cent were women. Most were very poor and three-quarters had never been to school because their parents could not afford to send them. They came from all communities and religions. A few affluent people were illiterate and normally did not disclose this but they were located and persuaded to join the campaign. These had classes in their homes so that other people did not have to know they were illiterate.

Those who were interested in learning were invited to attend evening classes. Classes lasted 1-2 hours and in the Mulavukadu grama panchayat evening proved to be the best time for them to attend, when the working day had finished. Daytime classes were also run but these were not as full as in the day women had to be with their families or at work. The older learners had been born at a time when education was not so important, but they had ensured that their children received an education, so older women often looked after the household while the younger generation was out at work. Where necessary, children and grandchildren were allowed to come to the classes and the older learners in particular liked this – it made for a pleasant and familiar atmosphere. Classes were held in villages, in the panchayat library and sometimes in people's homes. They were close to the learners so it was easy for them to attend. When they had studied the alphabet, learners then practised writing letters to their sons and daughters who were away – in the Gulf, the USA, even Australia (Kerala has a high rate of emigration).

The learners were very enthusiastic. When interviewed for radio, television and newspapers, they said the classes were very interesting and useful for daily life. They felt that they had changed – they had been in the dark and now could read in front of other people. They had more self-confidence and self-esteem. Some wished they had had the chance fifteen years earlier – they had missed the chance to read over that period. They had great respect for their teachers and developed close relationships with them. All the learners in the panchayat succeeded in passing the test set at the end of classes. Important factors in the success of the campaign were grassroots participation and the energy and enthusiasm of the Collector, Mr Rajan.

The teachers' and the learners' interest in studying their language was part of the motivation but probably the greatest incentive was being able to read and write letters. It was such a pleasure to be able to read letters from their families without having to ask anyone else. Interpreters did not always read out the whole letter (especially if the news might have worried the recipient). So this was very satisfactory to them and there was a wonderful atmosphere in the classes. They had formerly asked their children to write letters for them and never knew exactly what they were writing – were even sometimes suspicious of them – but now they could write their own letters. And it was very nice for their absent children to receive letters in their mothers' own handwriting. It was also important that most teachers and learners were women: 'Lady teachers were very popular with the older ladies' (Advocate Haridas, interview, 2005).

The relapse

The 1991 census claimed a literacy rate for Kerala of 89.81 per cent - not the 93.58 per cent declared after the Total Literacy Campaign; the 2001 census reports 90.86 per cent, and this is

¹¹ A grama panchayat is the equivalent of a village council but it should be noted that villages in Kerala may have 20,000 inhabitants.

likely to be over-optimistic. Whatever the actual figures, the difference between the post-campaign and the census figures and the very small reported rise between 1991 and 2001 raise the question of what happened to all those who became literate in the Total Literacy Campaign. This has been the subject of a number of studies, including the later evaluation carried out by Dr Michael Tharakan. By 1999 only 40 per cent of the neo-literates could still read and write to an acceptable level. On the other hand, 72 per cent could still read, nearly 80 per cent were numerate and 40 per cent could give 'logical' explanations of natural events. Local knowledge was good (but could have been obtained by word of mouth). It was clear that, since the regression was not total, the 'world of letters' had become part of their world but there had not been a successful effort to help the neo-literates enter fully the 'world of literate communications' (Tharakan 2000, pp 41-42).

Tharakan's analysis pinpointed four reasons for the failure of those who had become literate during the Ernakulam campaign fully to retain their literacy: the quality of training given to the tutors, local political problems, political change at state level and the socio-economic circumstances of the learners. The last two were particularly important. After the first phase of basic literacy teaching, a second phase was planned. The Continuing Education Programme was to set up 25,000 permanent local literacy classes, with an academic council in each panchayat. A survey by the Kerala University Centre for Continuing Education, however, found that many of these plans were not carried out (Basheer 2002). Thanks to a change of government at state level, from Left to Congress-led, there was a six-month delay in implementation of the second phase, by which time many committed volunteers had moved on or were sidelined.

For some poorer groups, such as tribal peoples, the literacy gains were all but lost through the lack of any follow-up at all (Basheer 2002). The notion that neoliterates would be helped merely by living in a majority literate society proved to be false, as most came from strata that were deprived and had relatively little contact with literate people. It seems that 'the major gain in literacy that was made in Ernakulam through the Total Literacy Campaign seems to be in favour of those castes, communities and groups who belonged to the "mainstream" of society' (Tharakan 2002, p. 52). Over half the neoliterates had never attended school and nearly half had no literates in their families. The majority were very poor and from socially deprived areas. The expectation that they would, by continued 'self-learning', be able to maintain their newly acquired literacy skills was farfetched. Once the learners were left without any strong support and incentive whereby they were 'forced' to read and write, they naturally retreated to their own world of word-of-mouth communication, which under normal circumstances was sufficient (Tharakan 2000).

There is a happier note to record. Literacy is comparatively low among Muslims, especially older women, but young educated Muslim women were inspired to conduct classes in their homes. The women wanted to learn, not least because they had sons in the Gulf and had to take their letters to be read out to them. This group is still literate, and indeed their literacy has been strengthened, ten years later, because even after their younger relatives moved away they had access to their books and so had materials to read and keep them in practice (Tharakan 2000). This had an unexpected outcome.

The E-Literacy Campaign

In the heavily Muslim Malappuram District a group of Muslim women, who had relatives working in the Gulf, requested teaching in the use of computers and the Internet, so that they could keep in touch with their families more easily. The idea was taken up by the District and, by 2003, 500 learning centres had been set up, giving everyone free access to computer education. Many of the learners were older women and it is now estimated that almost every household in Malappuram has at least one e-literate person. As a result of this success, the project began to be rolled out to the rest of the State, beginning with the poorer Districts.

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR OLDER ADULTS

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Introduction

This presentation covers a discussion day held at Queen Margaret University in the RBS Centre for the Older Person's Agenda (COPA). The objectives were to discuss with associates of COPA: Perceptions of further/higher education: Perceptions of the older adult in further/higher education. An ideas session for topics; Practical issues.

Method

Forty COPA associates were randomly selected, 13 attended. A presentation was undertaken reviewing what courses are available in Scotland along with background on lifelong learning. Objectives one and two were covered by discussion, then participants were asked to portray their perceptions in images. Objectives three and four were covered in brainstorming sessions.

Results

Generally, perceptions of education were very traditional. Learners expect to turn up and be supplied information by the lecturer with possibly an exam at the end of the learning period. Today, theory is much more learner centred where the learner is charged with a problem. Learners need to define what it is they need to know and then research these topics, finally feeding back into for example a project/portfolio i.e. deeper learning rather than surface learning. This could be problematic to older people returning to education.

Participants felt that for older people returning to education there should be excitement and fulfilment– the pursuit of knowledge, opportunities and new horizons. Indeed, this is one of the main reasons for embarking on the 'adventure'. It was noted that much further/continuing education is geared towards younger people with facilities and support services aimed at them rather than older people. The environment should also be considered as learning is perceived as hard for older people. They should be given the opportunity to study in an environment which suits them in order to be able to reach what is possibly viewed as a 'lifetime achievement.'

A range of courses were suggested and those in line with QMUC subjects and areas of expertise will be developed. On the practical side of organising courses participants thought that short courses would be best with the option of mixing subjects. Cost was a concern as was funding. Views on accreditation were mixed, the main theme being that if assessment was to be included could it be done so that there was no pressure! In conclusion courses should be: fun; they should be inclusive and participative and well co-ordinated. Learners should be provided with appropriate support.

Yvonne Coull MBA, Dip Marketing (CIM)

An experienced marketer from the UK food industry. There is not a lot she does not know about fish and chips! Joining academia in later life she has specialised in education around nutrition and older adults and is developing a senior learner's programme at Queen Margaret University.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents findings from an informal discussion day held at Queen Margaret University in the RBS Centre for the Older Person's Agenda (COPA) regarding the development of a new

learning programme for older adults. The centre has developed education programmes to enable older people to contribute to and participate in partnership working, principally in the health care setting. This has resulted in the Education for Participation course containing four units: Drama for Democracy; Helping Older People to Tell Their Story; Deciphering Documents and Hearing the Voices of Older People in Formal Arenas. We wish to further develop this programme of courses along with courses in other areas for older adults.

It is recognised that an aging population will play a crucial role in the future of many activities (Scottish Executive, 2005). It is also noted that 'Older people are able to participate in learning activities both vocational and for personal learning.' They will seek out education to enable them to undertake their activities but in order for them to do so fully, they not only need the confidence to participate but the time (not at night) and cost will be factors must suit as well.

Many factors affect whether or not older people undertake education in later life. The most common one which springs easily to mind is redundancy and the need to retrain to find another position. In order to look at motivational factors influencing attendance it is important to be aware of individual needs and aspirations of each learner (Ballard and Morris, 2005) along with their previous experience or desire through a missed opportunity when younger.

In COPA we believe that education and participation can bring benefits to older people not least of which is positive mental health and well being in later life. Good mental health and well being in later life brings many benefits not only to older people themselves but also to society economically. (Schuller, 2004. UK Inquiry into Mental Health and Well Being in Later Life, 2006. Healthy Aging Project, 2007.) Before embarking on the development of a programme for senior learners we felt that it was important to take on board views of potential participants.

THE DISCUSSION DAY

This was a small in-house study which was intended to provide a quick and relatively easy snapshot of views for marketing and development purposes.

Objectives were to discuss with associates of COPA:

1. Perceptions of further/higher education
2. Perceptions of the older adult in further/higher education
3. Ideas for topics/courses
4. Practical issues.

Method

Forty COPA associates (older people) were randomly selected from the COPA database, 13 attended. All had attended an Education for Participation course during the previous three years.

A presentation was undertaken reviewing courses available in Scotland along with background on lifelong learning and the Scottish Executive Strategy (2003).

1. What courses are available for older learners?

The following items were presented:

- A. Senior Studies Institute, Strathclyde University
- B. Department of Adult and Continuing Education, Glasgow University
- C. Lifelong Learning Programme, University of Edinburgh
- D. Ransackers
- E. U3A
- F. Adult Learners

2. Perceptions of continuing education

POSITIVES

- More professional staff
- Smaller campuses and numbers of students
- Diverse student body – backgrounds/life experiences/age range
- Flexible learning opportunities
- Supportive staff tutoring

NEGATIVES

- Under resourced
- Bums on seats – funding by student numbers
- Low expectations of staff and students (ref. FE)
- Foreign students with language problems
- Not latest technology I.T. etc, poor quality environment
- High drop-out rate

Perceptions of older learners in continuing education

POSITIVES

- More life experience
- Willingness to learn without pressure
- More leisure time
- Better motivation
- Financial freedom
- No hang ups about being vocal in the group situation.

NEGATIVES

- Harder to remember things
- Slower to learn: old dog – new tricks
- Scared of new technology or do not see the need to use it
- Unaware of new methods or sources of learning
- Fixed ideas and prejudices
- Less flexible
- Not so physically able
- Talk too much and may ramble off the topic

Perceptions displayed in images

Participants were then set a task of portraying their perceptions with images in order to create pictures which would help to visualise their thoughts and feelings and lead to further discussion (Appendix). Newspapers and magazines had been collected from a variety of sources over a number of weeks. Some were supplied already cut out and others were still complete. Participant comments are shown in quotes.

Further/higher education in general (pictorial themes discussed)

Knowledge

General feeling of education was of knowledge being a funnelling downwards process into the student from above. A rainbow was highlighted by participants as showing opportunities, new horizons and the widening world. Sport and achievement also featured very highly.

Further education is often seen as the poor relation to higher education i.e. bums on seats/not up to date technology.

Excitement/Happiness/Fulfilment

Excitement and happiness were also themes which were predominant in discussion and participants choices of pictures. It was felt that students should be happy and excited about going to college/university to attend lectures and gain information. Some of the art images expressed fulfilment and participants felt that there was not enough excitement being produced by education today which could provide that fulfilment. It was noted that there is not enough education available ‘like that’ for older people.

Older People and Education

The question was raised by a participant – ‘why do older people not go?’

Participants felt that older people cannot get ‘into’ the education theme whereas it is readily available for younger people ‘who possibly don’t appreciate it’. It was also felt that more allowances were made for younger people (crèche facilities) and there is much support and flexibility for those wishing to learn but have family commitments or problems (e.g. drugs) than that available for older learners. Learning was seen as hard, it was also felt that ‘Older people should be given the opportunity to study different subjects which have not been available to them in the past.’

Environment is important within universities and ‘areas should be available in which older people should be able to study.’

Participants felt that ‘learning for older people should be viewed as a lifetime achievement – older people deserve a lifetime achievement for surviving well into old age! There is a lot of undefined talent in older people which only requires the opportunity to exist in order for them to develop – and the lifetime achievement should be seen as a starting point!’

Perceptions of older learners in further/higher education (pictorial themes discussed)

‘Fun/Sex/Stimulation’

‘Older people need stimulation – they don’t get enough! Education should be for fun and you never know who you will meet (friends or new partners). Older people can become so much more confident when completing education programmes and realise that age is not a barrier to learning.’ Older people can view education as ‘play time’ (more relaxed) which is important if education is to be enjoyed. Courses will be taken for sheer pleasure rather than with the view to getting a better job.

Youngsters

Older adults returning to education may feel like a ‘fish out of water’ as ‘younger people are so different from how they were in their day.’ ‘Young people may look at the older person with amusement.’ Participating in education with youngsters gives the older person an opportunity to enjoy learning but also ‘to give something back to youngsters’. Also ‘confidence to go on and do other activities is a result.’ Older students can be accepted by younger students if the right approach is used indeed, often younger students admire an older person’s achievements in education. It is not only a personal thing it is about interaction, participation in the community – it is not necessarily age related.

Negatives/Technology/New Ideas

Older people may not want to use the new technologies. ‘Many people say they are not interested but are they not interested because they don’t know how to use it.’ There are many negatives put forward by older people with regard to learning in new areas and new technologies. On the other hand some new technologies are seen as wonderful – spell checker for dyslexics and sound for the blind.

‘The opportunities are there to learn if you are not scared and have a vision.’

3. An Ideas Session

The following is a list of courses taken from the flipchart as a result of the brainstorming session. Participants were asked to try not to include traditional vocational classes but to think of topics aligned to the subject areas within QMUC.

Integration Skills – A way of working	Spirituality
1st Aid	Living with Dementia
Safety in the home	Drama for older people
Keep Fit	Fuller definition of mental problems
Environmental Projects	Poetry for you
Writers Class	Music – Singing
Music instruments	Art
Funding for projects	Confidence in Public/public speaking
Languages	Family History - computer programme
Facilities within the domestic situation - physical/mental	Computing - what do you want to know about
Yoga	Finance
Selecting a Care Home	Mental health and gardening
End Of life	Physical Exercise
Living wills / power of attorney	Self Knowledge - Philosophy
Keeping mentally active / physical	Quilt Making
Taster groups - topic based	NHS - comply cDDA Awareness
Away working	Care for someone with a stroke at home
Grand parenting – skills / finance / legal etc.	Info on help and support - rights and entitlements
Childcare - adapting	Understanding medication
Story Telling / Reminiscence	

4. Practical Issues

The following are the results of discussion and noted on the flipcharts.

Course should be held –

QMUC/locally/with adequate parking/easy public transport access/near to where people live/anywhere/throughout Scotland/using internet for rural areas/online viewing. Courses held in classrooms can be off putting.

Length of courses should be –

Between 10.00 – 15.00/ flexible i.e. £50 buys you 10 weeks but not necessarily on one course (due to illness)/termly (miss bad weather window)/short courses with option of incorporating a mix of subjects

Funding from where?

BGOP (Better Government for Older People)/local authority/discounts for older (retired) people/Scottish parliament/executive/lottery fund/banks and other sources of funding.

Accreditation?

Not relevant/meaningless/only as a feather in the cap but not necessary/like a certificate but no exams/essential/helps to maintain standards/sense of achievement.

Anything Else?

Keep it FUN/limit on class size/self help – training, admin, support/ ensure inclusive and participative/no pressure/professional/coherence, coordination, co-operation and communication/location/marketing.

DISCUSSION

The general perception of education from participants was very traditional. Students expect to turn up and be supplied information by the lecturer with possibly a project or an exam at the end of the period of learning. Whereas today, the theory is very much more 'learner centred' where the learner is charged (often in a group) with a problem. Students need to define themselves what it is they need to know and then research that knowledge finally feeding it back into the group project i.e. deep learning as opposed to surface learning (Biggs, 2003. Ramsden, 2003.). This could be problematic for older learners returning to education (as I have experienced myself).

Participants felt that for older people entering education there should be excitement and fulfilment– the pursuit of knowledge, opportunities and new horizons. Indeed this is one of the main reasons for embarking on the 'adventure'. It was noted though that much of further/continuing education is geared towards the younger person with facilities and support services aimed at them rather than older people. The environment should be considered as well as learning which is perceived as hard for older people. They should be given the opportunity to study in an environment which suits them in order to be able to reach what is possibly viewed as a lifetime achievement.

Education is undertaken for a variety of reasons: to meet people; to become more confident; sheer pleasure rather than to 'get a new job'.

There are worries though about younger people – participants felt that they are so different and may look on the older person with amusement. The same concerns are felt about new technologies unless there is a reason for using them, participants did not feel the need to embrace them. Although, there were examples where older people have embraced new technology with enthusiasm – producing documents, using the spell checker, speaking computers etc.

The experience of those who had been through some further/higher education in later life was that younger students not only accepted older people but admired them and long standing relationships were formed. It was felt that those who had successfully achieved in education could go on to participate more fully not only in community life but throughout a whole range of activities.

CONCLUSION

This small piece of work has given us much thought for the future and the information will assist in developing programmes and ensuring that we take account of needs of older adults when they come to QMU for their unique learning experience. Attached is the first programme which we have managed to run successfully this year. Planning is underway for the next academic year.

A final thought is attached from a paper on the Higher Education Academy web site where perceptions were gained from groups with low participation in higher education (I just thought it was for people with loads of money, 2003).

I thought higher education would be – 'Terrifying. I thought it was for like, well I did, I just thought it was for people with loads of money who went on to do high powered jobs'

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STARTING TO PLAY A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT IN LATER LIFE : A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

Allegro assai

Human beings who love music might find immense satisfaction in starting to play a musical instrument in later life and thus improve the quality of their daily life. This satisfaction is possible because music represents for many people (but not all) a basic need, related to very early development. Newborn babies distinguish very well between different sounds; they recognize the voice of their mum close after birth. Babies in general love music because in the womb they lay in the middle of the thumping, rustling, thundering and peeping sounds of veins, heart, lungs, stomach and intestines. Starting to play music later in life becomes a way of telling the story of what happened to a person in her/his life, which can contribute a lot to help the organism to function as well as it can.

Andante

When someone is starting to play an instrument, new neuronal connections are created and both hemispheres are activated. When a person is over 50, it takes more time to imprint the movements, but this shortage is easily compensated by awareness of the whole process. Our brain functions like an orchestra without director. All the instruments are present, each with its specific sound and rhythm. A person, when performing music, creates the sounds of a score which (s)he carries in her/his mind.

Allegretto

Music is music, whether sung or played by an instrument. In the end singing which can touch many of us so deeply is nothing else but breathing out with a sound. Of course, the choice of an instrument is important, because in an older person this always related to her/his experiences of life. Many women who are 60 or more, have not been allowed to play the violin, because a good girl should play the piano. Until 100 years ago women could not play cello in Western Europe in public performances. The more the body of the player melts together with the instrument, the better sound will be produced. Daily practice will easily become an exercise in concentration and it helps wonderfully to liberate the self from its problems. It is like a brainshower which feels like balsam, altogether a most thrilling adventure along with the journey of life of a senior person.

Dr. Brit de Jong has been teaching social philosophy and women studies for about ten years. She retired early because of health problems and found music became more and more important. She leads women choirs, accompanies musicians on the piano and for eight years has been a passionate cello student. Brit will illustrate her ideas in the workshop with her own cello music.

Seniors learn mainly conceptually, while children learn through their body and through imitation. When a senior is studying a new piece of music, first (s)he will reason and process what has to be done through the brain. This of course has got consequences for the music lessons: there is a lot more talking in the lessons with seniors than with children. But one cannot learn to play an instrument by talking and reasoning. The teacher will be aware of the fact that the senior student might not have been a student for ages, and of the fact that, with the role of being a student, fears of insecurity, of failure ecc. might be provoked, whether related to the past or not, which can be painful.

Very often, bodily reactions to music are disturbed in senior students. The intellectual share is overdeveloped compared with the more instinctive part. Often there is no way to express the emotions the music evokes. Without physical reaction, no emotion can be felt fully ; oppressing the physical reactions, the emotions slowly wither like plants without enough water. In many seniors this is the case: learning to play an instrument might become a positive and pleasant way to repair the bodily component of perception and emotion, one of the special, not easy, tasks of teaching music to senior students!

Playing an instrument is physical labour, besides a mental process as will be spoken about later. Children have the capacity of learning through their body spontaneously, seniors often can find back this capacity, so basic for music education , by singing, clapping, walking, doing rhythmic games, just like kids do when they go to music lessons. There is no reason at all to not integrate these games in teaching music to seniors.

Antistrofa

When teaching music to senior students, three observations return again and again.....like a ritornello “ I am too old to learn to play the piano”

This is an important objection, because a senior with this mental approach, will easily become disillusioned. Of course, a person of 70 years has got less time of life to realize a project than a child of 10. Our senior student will not be able to win the Tour de France, but is that a reason not to drive a bicycle? There is no reason at all to consider a 70 years old person too old to learn to play an instrument, provided there are (more or less) realistic aims. Best age for learning is over, that is true, there is a best age for learning to walk, to talk, to ride a bike, to swim, for learning music techniques. Instead of the easy way a child learns, seniors have got (as compensation) understanding and insight which are of great help.

“My memory works like a strainer”

As a senior student, the logical connection between things which have to be memorized, is much more clear which perfectly compensates the good memory of a child.

“My fingers have become too stiff”

Indeed.....most instruments need good mobility of fingers, which is better in a young music student. Usually the capacity to learn new, complex patterns of movements, remains sufficiently intact to not hinder the process of learning to play an instrument. Appropriate training is a presupposition and over the last years many teachers of senior students are developing their own ways to train the fingers of their senior students.

Alegretto

When we see a pianist playing well, it seems as if the tones are rolling from her/his sleeves. It looks so easy, (to make it look so easy actually is a basic skill of a music performer or dancer or acrobat and so on.), but of course a lot of work has been done to make it look so easy. First of all is music connected with brainactivities, like every mental process. The whole process can be described as: orders are given to the brain to create sounds and are being transferred to muscular groups through neuronal transmission. When someone is starting to play an instrument, new neuronal connections get created and both hemispheres are activated. When this person is over 60, it takes more time to imprint the movements needed to play, but this shortage is easily compensated by awareness of the whole process, as argued before.

Our brain functions like an orchestre without director. All the instruments are present, each with its specific sound and rythm. A person, when performing music, creates the sounds of a score which (s)he carries in her/his mind. But who o what decides the sounds our performer produces?

Andante

The perception of the inner sound in the music student is the touchstone or test by which the sounds produced by her/him have to be tested. This implies that right from the beginning as much attention is given to the bodily movements, necessary to create the desired sounds, as to listening to the sounds produced. In the end someone who plays music can only play the music (s)he hears. So listening to music and developing the inner hearing of the student is as important as practising the movements in the process of learning to play. This can be very exciting for a senior student, because very often (s)he will have a clear opinion about the sound quality of performances on cd's, of concerts heard. Sharing views with the teacher, can contribute to find out what kind of sound the senior wants to produce, what kind of music (s)he really wants to play well. Briefly: the capacity of innerly hearing forms the leading principle to an adequate technique.

The more the body of the player is melting with the instrument, the better sound is produced.

Andante grazioso

The choice of an instrument is obviously very important, because in a senior always related to a life - long experience. Maybe an older sister already played a German flute, while you would have loved it but your parents did not want you to. Maybe at school you have been teased because you sang out of tune, while you would love singing lessons now.

Music is music, whether sung or played by an instrument. Some people consider a voice an instrument, others don't like that concept: in the end singing, which can touch many of us so deeply is nothing else but breathing out with a sound.

Many women above 60, have not been allowed to play the violin in Western Europe, because a well - educated girl would play the piano. Until 100 years ago women could not play cello in public performances, in this part of the world.

Most instruments but not all need a good mobility of the fingers, represented in the brain almost everywhere. Some need much more breath capacity than others, some need good coordination between hand and feet. There are instruments which immediately give some results, like a guitar, what of course can be great fun. Others seem to take ages and take a (very, very) long breath. The choice is extremely vast, now that instruments from all over the world get more and more available, which means that there is a huge variety of possibilities.

Menuetto

Let's come now to a concrete music lesson. Shaping a lesson around one or two concrete pieces our senior student would like to play, seems to give major results. So there is a piece of music, the student wants to study. All the aspects involved in playing the piece, get a place in the lesson. The desired sound, the rhythm, the movements needed, questions on key or reading, dynamics, tempo, whatever one can think about is being gone through. Every part of the lesson is functional to playing the piece.

This really might sound like an open door, but it is not. The teaching model, still used by so many methods, courses, schools, puts the goals far ahead, promising fantastic results after many years of very hard work. Learning to play music is not a road that follows such a calm, even pace, specially when applied to older students. It is full of rapids and moments of stagnation. The

process is as important as the results, at least for a senior music student. I plead in favour of not using such methods when teaching seniors.

Tom de Vree developed the model described in this movement and called it the 'flower model' in music teaching, in his book, 'Didactics of instrumental and vocal music teaching', The Netherlands 1988, only available in Dutch I fear. He did not specifically develop this model for senior students, but in my experience it works extremely well with seniors, in groups, choirs for instance, as well as in individual lessons. The piece of music is the flower, whose petals are slowly opening, all together. Being able to play the piece as well as you can and as you want it to sound, even at a very initial stage, can give great satisfaction. During the workshop on Friday 11th of May, I would like to put in practice this flower model starting from three pieces of music. Together we can choose which one we work out first and so on. For this paper I freely used and quoted his book.

Finale gioioso

Starting to play a musical instrument can become a way to tell the story of what happened to us during our life and can contribute a lot to keep us going in a positive way.

Daily practice easily becomes an exercise in concentration, leaving all our sorrows for the time being behind. It helps to liberate the self, (always the cause of our misery,) of its problems. Playing the instrument we love will more and more feel like a delicious brainshower, like balsam for the soul; it might become a new adventure, along with our journey of life as a senior person.

Brit de Jong, (The Netherlands, 1944) Philosopher (drs.), Choirdirector and Pianoteacher (d.m.). She now is a passionate cello student in later life, among other activities.
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OLD MASTERS – ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE LIVES AND LEARNING OF OLDER PEOPLE

Sylvia Dow – Arts education consultant

Abstract

Governments, retailers, and media are aware of the changing demographic, and the resultant movement of balance within the various age groups of this and other countries. Governments take note of what that means in political terms and issues for voters, and commercial interests are only too aware of what the 'grey pound' can mean to them.

Despite this, government initiatives, and media coverage are still obsessed with the physical contexts of growing old, and with the idea of the elderly as weak, voiceless victims – of crime, cold weather, illness, mental impairment.

The cultural, creative and artistic lives and needs of older people are too often ignored or neglected, and even where projects are in place to address this they are too often predicated on the view of older people as history keepers, lookers to the past, those who pass on their stories and wisdom to the young. There is no doubt that this is important, and cannot be undervalued, but older people are people with a future too, and people whose creative needs are as important as everyone else's.

In fact there are some studies, which indicate that creative and artistic experiences may be even more important to older people. There are clear benefits in terms of mental stimulation, social interaction, confidence and self-worth, but Dr. Gene M. Cohen's research in the US also indicates an actual improvement in the physical brain specifically in the growth of dendrites.

Opportunities for creativity are valued by older people as can be seen by the popularity of several projects around Scotland. There is a good deal of scope for increasing the numbers of these projects especially through learning channels. The Scottish Adult Learning Project has just completed the first phase of a creativity in learning project for older people with a research and development initiative and imminent publication of a manual aimed at those wishing to set up such projects. The next stage is to make manifest the principles outlined in the toolkit document with the setting up of several pilot projects.

What constitutes good practice in this area? Signposts for such projects can be summed up as the establishment, management and maintenance of the following five areas.

Consultation; Collaboration; Creativity; Co-ordination; Cash

Older people benefit markedly, and in very real terms from artistic and creative activities. These stimulate the brain, improve health and wellbeing and help offset negative stereotyping. They help older people find confidence and their own voices, allowing both themselves and wider society to recognise them as contributors rather than victims, with creative lives, opinions, experience, and most of all, a fulfilling and satisfying future.

Sylvia Dow's career has revolved around the arts. After acting and teaching she became Arts Education Officer at Stirling's MacRobert Centre, then Arts Education Co-ordinator for Central Region, followed by Head of Education and Lifelong Learning at The Scottish Arts Council. Now she is a freelance arts education consultant in project management and training.

Old people are in the news. After years of a kind of benign neglect of the whole subject of ageing, suddenly governments – and consequently the media – are on our case. They can't ignore the demographic of course. There are indeed more and more of us, living longer, requiring pensions and benefits, health care and domestic support. We are, we are told, cluttering up hospital beds, and costing the taxpayer too much in pensions, but at the same time everyone

realises that we are the keepers of the grey pound and, at 21.5% of Scotland's population a considerable voting force.

The stereotype of the older person as someone who has infirmity of body and mind, conservatism of activity and mind-set, unwillingness to take risk, get involved in social action or take on board new ideas, is being challenged every day by seniors across Scotland.

And yet the stereotype is clung to by many public bodies, commercial interests and most especially the media, which seem to be obsessed with the physicality of growing old, with older people as victims of age, or with the need to stay looking young. Each time there is a television feature on a senior issue it always seems to be accompanied by the same stock footage of some poor old soul hunched over a one-bar electric fire.

Of course initiatives which concentrate on alleviating the physical and practical challenges of old age are to be welcomed and are vitally important in a country where one on six pensioners live in poverty, but it is clear that wherever opportunities are given for older people to use their brains, utilise their experience and exercise their creativity, they have seized upon these opportunities to prove themselves, not simply as recipients of state benefits, as 'poor old souls', but as active participants in, and contributors to, society.

Age Concern Scotland has stated: *...age and ageing are becoming increasingly relevant in the public and political arena. Older people are becoming increasingly vocal, with a willingness and ability to use their financial muscle. Increasing numbers lead to greater political influence, while a significant proportion of retired people while a significant proportion of retired people has the means to exercise real consumer power.*

And from our government's most recent and very welcome recent strategy, All our Futures: planning for a Scotland with an ageing population:

Our vision is for a Scotland where: All the years of life are fulfilling and the contribution of older people...is valued, appreciated and, where necessary, supported.

This paper constitutes some special pleading for the inner needs, the brain and soul nourishment requirements, if you will, of older people to be recognised, encouraged, and supported, and my particular case is for the arts.

Why the arts? Well after a life spent in the arts, in a variety of roles I know of their power to change lives, to engender self worth, and to release or renew powers of expression, but is there a particular case for arts in the lives – and often in or through the learning – of seniors? It seems there is.

Creativity is a mysterious thing. It's an attribute of every human being, not just the great and the gifted, not just the young. Age can bring an enriched sense of self, and, often people are more creative in their later years. G Goldman 'Late Bloomers'

Creativity may indeed be 'mysterious' but there are two things we can say about it with confident certainty. One is that it is within the province of everybody, without exception, and the other is that it is not the sole preserve of the arts. Creativity is concerned with 'doing', with participating in an activity which has a possible outcome.

One of the world's leading experts on creativity, Sir Kenneth Robinson has written:

The first step (in understanding creativity) is to recognise that being creative involves doing something. People are not creative in the abstract; they are creative in something- in mathematics, in engineering, in writing, in music, in business, in whatever. You could not be

creative unless you were actually doing something. In this respect, creativity is different from imagination. (Sir Ken Robinson 'Out of our Minds')

It can be argued that arts activities are a prime conduit for creativity and that they offer unparalleled opportunities for participation and engagement. We can all, potentially, dance, sing, act, make music, paint, make film, or enjoy any of the other branches of art. These kinds of life elements have been an integral and essential part of the human experience from the earliest days of humanity. The benefits such participation can bring apply to everyone but there are some particular benefits to be had by older people.

A key benefit is stimulation; not just in a general sense, but in very real physical and neurological terms. Dr. Gene M. Cohen has made a lifetime study of the effects of creative activity on older people in the United States. His studies show that if older people continue to challenge their minds and stimulate their creativity, they not only feel better, but also cause brains to sprout new branches, or dendrites. These new branches actually improve brain function and help compensate for the small loss of brain cells that comes with age. In effect, the ageing brain responds to mental exercise in much the same way that muscle responds to physical exercise. He found other important side-effects too, such as improvements in overall health, better concentration and focus, significantly fewer falls and doctors visits, less depression and more engagement with other activities

These results point to powerful positive intervention effects of these community-based art programs run by professional artists. They point to true health promotion and disease prevention effects. In that they also show stabilization and actual increase in community-based activities in general in the Intervention Group, they reveal a positive impact on maintaining independence and on reducing dependency. This latter point demonstrates that these community-based cultural programs for older adults appear to be reducing risk factors that drive the need for long-term care." Dr Gene M. Cohen

(There was another unforeseen side effect. Participants reported an improvement in libido, and Dr Cohen tells he story that when the control group heard report of this they demanded, as a group, to be moved to the participating group.)

Dr Cohen's research points to general health benefits but there are also very particular physical benefits from arts participation, from improved hand-eye co-ordination, and ease of bodily movement, to increased lung capacity. When the Serendipity choral project for older people was set up in East Lothian, the music director soon found that word-of-mouth led to local doctors referring people with breathing problems – and those with depressive illness – to the choir, recognising the clear therapeutic benefit of singing, and singing together.

Although creativity is a very personal thing, it is a fact that a great deal of arts activity is carried out in a group, giving huge social benefits to the participants. This is true, of course, of most organised activity but working together in a creative way has a remarkably bonding effect. Anyone who has taken part in drama activity, prepared for an art exhibition, or participated in a dance performance will know the sense of togetherness and belonging which comes out of such an experience. For many older people this can be a vital social lifeline.

One of the most important things arts and creativity can bring to older people is a feeling of self-worth. Old age can bring with it a sense of invisibility and of lack of empowerment, a feeling of not being consulted, not being listened to. Arts are all about self expression, about making one's voice heard through everything from writing to dance. To find one's own voice in this way is deeply satisfying but also confidence building.

And finally creative activity is immensely enjoyable. Making and doing, participating in the fullest sense in what has been described as the use of ‘applied imagination’ can be absorbing, fulfilling (and sometimes frustrating!), but it always brings enjoyment and pleasure.

The learning context

If lifelong learning is to mean exactly what it says, it follows that no-one should be barred from educational opportunities, that no subject should be exempt, and all should have equal value. It also means that education should be valued for its own sake, not just as a means to an end.

Our government’s strategy document referred to earlier, makes a pledge to:

..offer learning opportunities through life,

and while, understandably making no mention of specific subject areas, stresses that learning for older people can be about skills and re-training for employment but also should be about having access to:

learning opportunities for their personal development, improving their quality of life and helping them to lead positive and fulfilled lives.

Delivering arts and creativity through formal learning channels is an ideal way to introduce older people to both learning and the arts. It can serve as a perceived ‘safe ‘ way into learning and can lay down a pathway to other learning opportunities.

Every year the Scottish Adult Learning Partnership hosts an Adult Learning Awards event to celebrate the remarkable stories of people who have changed their lives through learning. The oldest learner ever to receive an award was over 90. She wanted to write her life story, and to do that she not only took a writing class, but followed that with a computer literacy course to give her the technology to get her words down on paper. One thing, in learning terms, led to another, the artistic part acting as a gateway to other learning opportunities.

Many older people are already deeply involved in learning. Here at the University of Strathclyde Senior Studies Institute the whole learning programme has been a remarkable success, now boasting an enviable number of mature students attending a wide variety of classes. Some of their most popular classes are those in the arts, and indeed the Institute pioneered, and still run, a programme called EnCourage specifically designed to introduce older people from all walks of life to arts and culture, making partnerships with many of Glasgow’s cultural institutions, such as Scottish Ballet and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

Learning and arts working in synergy allows learning providers to stretch their boundaries to encompass a group of people often forgotten, in a context in which lifelong learning is often seen as purely instrumental, a means to an ‘employability’ end. Many older people do want to re-train or start new employment but many also want to make up for lost time in learning something new or gaining skills they missed out on acquiring in the past. For those providing experiences in the arts, be they artists, art teachers, or arts organisations, working with older people can be stimulating and energising. Many artists have a great deal of experience in this field and they can bring exciting and engrossing ways of creative working to the education agenda.

Delivering arts programmes, however, especially for the uninitiated cannot and should not simply be a case of providing a few classes and hoping that will suffice.

I believe that there are 5 key words , all beginning with ‘C’ which are necessary to take account of before embarking on an arts or arts in learning programme. They are:

- Consultation
- Collaboration
- Creativity

- Co-ordination
- Cash
- Conviction
- Commitment

Because without these last two, there is little point in going ahead – there has to be a belief that the arts can be of real and last value to seniors.

Consultation

Any undertaking, however modest, cannot, or should not get underway until full consultation has taken place with the participants. This is particularly true of work with older people because it is often assumed that, as with children, ‘we’ know what’s best, and that ‘they’ are not capable of thinking for themselves.

As an example, it is often assumed that what older people like to do in the arts will always be in some way looking back; ‘reminiscence projects’, as they are usually known. And these can be a really good way of introducing people to local or national history, by taking a personal route. There are many projects like this, successfully taking people on a pathway from personal history and biography through to the bigger picture in historical terms. Some of these may be described at this conference – outstanding projects such as the pan-European Memory Box project initiated and run by respected age and arts pioneer Pam Schweitzer.

But it cannot be assumed that that is what any group, wants. They may see themselves, with justification, as people with a future as well as a past. They may want to engage with popular culture or contemporary issues. They may agree with Julia Honess, Older Peoples Programmer at Entelechy Arts, who wrote: *When community and non-professional arts programmes are targeted on older people, they are often reminiscence projects which, by definition, will focus on the past, or they subscribe to a convention of remembering ‘the good old days’. Older people find themselves, too often, the subjects for younger artists’ projects, or that they are patronised, or not taken seriously.*

Consultation is the key to making sure a project is not an imposition, a ‘top-down’ decision, but a collaborative effort.

Collaboration

Collaboration is just another way of saying working in partnership. And, as implied above, the first key collaboration is with the participating group. They have to feel that they are in this together and that they have full ownership of their learning.

Fruitful partnerships can be made with local or national arts providers, and local Council arts officers, and it is not only a financial partnership which can be helpful. These people have contacts, experience, and advice to give.

Finding common ground with social work, education or health boards can lead to productive collaborations too. It is surprising what such collaborations can bring in the way of fresh ideas, and sometimes even funding.

Creativity

It is vital that the creative part of the arts-learning experience be of as high a quality as is possible. The ultimate goal may be a particular set of learning outcomes but if arts are being used as an entry point, the arts part has to be as challenging and satisfying as possible in order to give confidence and a sense of genuine and merited achievement to the participants. Creativity has to do with imaginative processes which have outcomes. It is about thinking AND doing, and the ‘doing’ part must be encouraged and developed by an expert.

It is important, then, that the person or organisation you choose to deliver the arts experience is someone who knows how to work in this way. No-one would call an amateur to take out your appendix, or teach your children. In the arts it is just as important to use an expert

practitioner. We are fortunate here in Scotland that we have many talented artists and arts organisations, many of whom are very well experienced in working in an education context. They bring professionalism and commitment to all their education work, but finding just the right person for the job can be a challenge.

Co-ordination

Whenever a development of any ongoing project arises, it increases the burden of management, especially if what is added is something outside the managers comfort zone. So it will be if you choose to use arts activities to the learning environments you already have in process.

But the very novelty of it means that it will have to be well managed in order that it should not fail before it's had a chance to bed in. Working with an artist may be a new experience but with good communication and clear common understanding of aims, objectives and remits, it should be less of a problem and more of a pleasure.

Cash

Empty pockets never held anyone back. Only empty heads and empty hearts can do that.

Norman Vincent Peale

Given all that has been said above about the importance of a quality, and using expert arts input, good management, and a bottom-up consultation process, it seems clear that some funding is a necessity to make such an undertaking work.

A lot can be done with a little, and there are sources of help in-kind in the way of materials and space, which can offset quite a bit of budget.

It can take time to find sources of cash and other help, but with some sturdy partnerships, and a clear vision, a bit of dedication will pay off.

And what of the outcomes? The arts cannot offset poverty, but they can offset poverty of aspiration; they cannot provide heating in a cold house, but they can warm the soul and stoke the fires of imagination; they cannot offer a cure for old age but they can offer a cure for a view of old age as something which **needs** a cure - a view of that time rather as a time of ongoing personal development and looking to the future. As Hokusai – Japanese artist extraordinaire – wrote

All that I have produced before the age of 70 is not worth taking into account. At 73 I learned a little about the real structure of nature, of animals, plants, trees, birds, fishes and insects. In consequence, when I am 80, I shall have made still more progress. At 90 I shall penetrate the mystery of things; at 100, I shall certainly have reached a marvellous stage; and when I am 110, everything I do, be it a dot or a line, will be alive. If heaven gives me 10 more years, or an extension of even 5 years, I shall surely become a true artist

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LEARNING THROUGH PARTICIPATION: THE ROLE OF OLDER PEOPLE IN POLICY AND PLANNING

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Abstract

It is now generally assumed that older people should be involved directly in determining outcomes that affect them, be it in the design of appropriate local facilities, the provision of services (form and quality of care), the level of pensions, life-long learning or whatever. In the liberal democratic terms which infuse current discussion, older people (as citizens) are to have a voice, choose, participate, be empowered. As in democratic theory at large, the processes of participation and involvement are seen as themselves educational and dynamic. This paper will examine these democratic (participatory) aspirations in relation to the actual programmes which bring in older people, using examples from self-help groups, volunteer training, local practice, and literature. It is argued that such experience contributes significantly to learning, development and self-determination, and to connection and communication with others.

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Introduction

It is a common view now that older people should be involved directly in determining the arrangements that affect them, be it the design of appropriate facilities, the provision of services (eg the form and quality of care) and life-long learning opportunities, though some matters of intimate concern to them, such as the level of pensions, must remain the decision of more powerful players (politicians). The degree of appropriate older person power varies from case to case.

The official literature concerning older age, from the government, health and social services, and the voluntary sector, envisages the empowerment of older people and generally takes a positive view of their capacities, rejecting sharply the old negative models of provision from on high, delivered to a passive, subordinate and fading clientele. The grounds for this approach are not necessarily love and respect for older humankind, and may indeed arise from more pragmatic considerations eg that prevention is not only better but also much cheaper than cure.

In very broad and simplified terms, the traditional and the new models of policy for older people, resting upon assumptions of what they are like, can be seen as negative and positive. The first is negative in its assumptions about the nature of aging and of older people, who are usually stereotyped as 'the elderly'. That stereotype takes for granted a steady, universal and roughly uniform degeneration of the faculties, with older people seen commonly as weak, bent, frail, confused, wandering, depressed and unable to manage. This approach is central to disengagement theory, which links chronological, biological, mental and emotional states to create a rigid psychological differentiation of life stages, with old people systematically cutting themselves off from hitherto normal activity and connectedness. Old age becomes little more than the anteroom of death, and consequently the conception of suitable arrangements is likely to be a paternalistic and crisis-based one. Older people are to be looked after and organised,

protected against both themselves and others, with institutionalisation and infantilisation as suitable modes of treatment. They are consumers, subjects and patients, passive recipients of services, not citizens with rights, duties and capacities for development.

The positive model, increasingly fuelled but not created by the demands of a new and more assertive generation of older people, commonly called baby boomers, emphasises their ability to live more active, diverse and fulfilling lives than paternalistic approaches allow. Older people are seen as neither homogeneous nor finished, but as living a rich variety of lives, and as capable of much more if conditions – resources, structures, processes – are encouraging. They are citizens, active possessors of rights, and as their needs and preferences are considered seriously, they are an increasingly formidable force in the political arena itself.

The social policy outcomes of the two models, with their different understandings of ageing and of human nature, are clearly quite different. The ‘negative’ approach is characterised by notions such as dependency, care, protection, security and crisis, and its prescriptions commonly emphasise institutionalisation and regulation. At this point it should be underlined that this remains part of the whole story – many people, including large numbers of very old people, will not fully meet the challenges of independence and choice (they might choose not to) but will require, or want, closer support, a kind of structured dependency. What this suggests is that negative and positive, realistic and utopian, are not simple options: we must assume that many older people may not be capable of a high level of independence, nor desire it, and that every older person should be given the degree of support which enables them to develop as far as they can and wish.

The positive approach has a focus and a vocabulary which I think should lie at the heart of social policy. Its key words include health, well-being, choice, independence, empowerment, participation, maybe citizenship. The individual’s needs and rights are seen, as far as possible, in an age-blind way. In Shakespeare’s languid observation, ‘Age is but man’s measurement of time.’ That inevitable measurement of time is quite at harmony with the recognition that older people are part and parcel of the same world as others, and are entitled to the same range of choice. There is a common tendency to reduce the amount of choice, the range of life, of joy, of ‘immorality’ available to older people, especially if they are also classified as mentally ill. There is a lot of judgmentalism and discrimination regarding what is appropriate to particular ages, so that making love, dancing in the streets (as distinct from tea-dancing), demonstrating, seem obscenities when practised by ‘the elderly’ (or ‘grey-haired grannies’). In fact, if the choices actually made are seen as unacceptable, it is sometimes held that the capacity for choice no longer exists. ‘Bad’ behaviour becomes a sign of mental inadequacy.

It must be acknowledged at once that, while these general images or stereotypes are inescapable, they can never capture the reality, and especially the diversity, of the real world. But, rather than blinding us, or deciding us in advance, they may function as guide principles in that an image of the older person as (at least potentially!) independent, choosing, seeking more education and a fuller life, will encourage us to seek the resources and arrangements which make that as widely realised as possible. We wouldn’t simply put them away. Hence, whether optimistic or without hope, it is clear there is no homogeneous or common class of older people – ‘the elderly’ – be they virtual carcasses (one implication of THE ELDERLY, in my view) or liberated American grannies white-water rafting in the Grand Canyon. The mixed and complex stories of ageing indicate widely varying possibilities – underlain by background and resources – and suggest that the noble goal of empowerment may work for some, but only to a degree for all.

There is always a gap between ideal and actuality unless one is stuck fast to the earth. Liberalism, which gives us much of the current language of diversity and independence, was bold, affirmative and positive in its claims for liberty and choice, but its ideals never came close

to reality. Well-intentioned people lacked power, resources and perhaps even staying power and an unbroken reforming will. We should accept that in our world we will always fall short, and that the talk of politicians will always be inflated, skating over difficulties and evading discordant facts: in politics, and perhaps especially in the politics of ageing, we will remain more familiar with fine words than with fine realities. Shortage of resources is a fact of life, (though we are less short than most others), as is unwillingness to confront growing inequality or to spend as much as might be available on decent causes. No Iraq could provide millions of longer learnings. But, of course, we fight within the cloth that is cut. Social resources are not just financial, and one minor salvation is people's own resources, the development of their capacities despite their circumstances. There are many examples of triumph over the harshest and most crushing of conditions.

Thus, though the struggle is hard, complex and, in the last resort, unwinnable – scarce and contested resources, ageist stereotypes and discrimination, illness, fatigue, fatalism, collapse and cynicism amongst older people themselves – many older people are engaged and enthusiastic, and demand the right to participate directly in the processes which determine the outcomes which affect them. If, following Blair, citizens are to be empowered to shape services, this requires both effective participatory processes – not mere window-dressing – and at least some successful outcomes. It is clear that participation, social and political activity, even battering one's heads against brick walls, are dynamic processes, transforming and in a broad sense educational – not in the sense of institutions, lectures and certificates (though these may be part of it), but in that of working with others in decision-making activities which are open, flexible and real. Participation must amount to more than occasional consultation, answering questions while remaining on the edge of things.

Before moving on to particular examples and analysis of these informal education processes, two sets of distinctions should be brought out: the first between formal and effective democracy and the second between formal schooling and broader, less institutionalised forms of learning. The meaning of democracy has been contested from its beginnings. The thinner version sees democracy as a set of rights eg the rights to vote, assemble, speak freely, campaign and protest, live free of violation by the state and other people. It is certainly not to be sneered at or dismissed, as such liberties are essential to a free and civilized existence and an open society. The second, thicker conception emphasises meaningful participation, the dangers of the so-called free market (to liberty and choice, for example) and the central importance of developing the capacities of all citizens. It is likely to be more friendly to equality, social justice and community. My account of some examples of participation by older people will link it emphatically with the thicker, more social version, of democracy.

By formal education I mean education which is certified as such – teachers, classes, timetables, examinations, declared results – though the processes of such education may themselves be open, informal and liberating. In our context it would include some parts of life-long learning and adult education, and would raise the issue of the right of older people to university education, for example. Informal education refers to all these processes which shape people and may help awaken and enlighten them, expanding their connections and their connectedness. It includes the arrangements in which older people are allowed, encouraged and helped to act and decide their own futures, whether in the immediate personal form of direct budgets and choices over care or in the rich, active and diverse life of the third sector.

The level and the forms of participation available to older people vary widely, as does their readiness to act. The simplest and most individual level is when a choice is given, perhaps over meals or entertainments, or more substantially where they have the right to manage their own care budgets, which would clearly stimulate mental energies more than generalised external decisions. I prefer the right to choose, but I won't comment on that any more.

Consultation may sound more than it is. Eliciting older people's views, on whatever subject, is good, but it easily becomes a process of trickery, a travesty of democratic choice. If it is to be deep and meaningful (and educative) it must be presented in the right way, so that forms are open, clear and realistic, and discussions are empathetic, and it must have discernible impacts upon the final decision. Consultation remains an important 'democratic' device for discovering the needs and wishes of particular social groups.

A higher and more educational form of participation arises when members of a group are given an effective role in defining a facility or arrangement, as in the Newcastle housing example², where the participation of disabled clients in the design of their building arrangements enabled sensible adjustments, undreamed of by bureaucratic planners, as well as empowering the clients.

Formal volunteering in NPOs or NGOs, charities, the third sector, is not only essential to the survival of both society and economy but is a powerful source of intellectual and moral development, though that depends to some extent on the training possibilities. In an article on community volunteering in Toronto³, Miga Narushima demonstrates the importance of 'transformative learning' in the experience of her sample volunteers. Her older volunteers offer their services out of both a sense of obligation and for personal (or 'selfish') gains as well. Virtually all volunteering experience is educational, stimulating mental activity, spiritual growth and a larger understanding of others. The 'community of learning' which develops incorporates both 'instrumental' and 'integrative' elements. The former comprises skills training which we associate with a more formal sense of education eg the development of capacities in Information Technology, or interviewing or report writing. Integrative learning includes inter-personal skills, leadership ability and understanding differences in people and culture⁴. Through community volunteering her sample of older people gain 'a sense of autonomy and self-worth, continual learning and development, an active and positive life-style and support networks.'⁵ And in the process of volunteering, people are likely to be stretched and to face novel and complex situation, creating a 'disorienting dilemma', provoking 'self-examination', 'critical reflection', 'exploring and planning new roles' and 'negotiating relationships', all being steps towards the 'transformation of state of mind.'⁶ Thus volunteering provides many rewards, in terms of self-esteem and self-validation, self-knowledge, connection with community and citizenship, independence and decision-making, and a number of particular practical skills. This suggests the importance of training programmes within volunteering arrangements, but also the obvious development of the capacities and insights of older people, perhaps especially in cultivating 'generativity' and a powerful sense of duty to future generations. It also indicates that society and the economy would not survive without the voluntary action of legions of 'do-gooders', and that the state needs to recognise that this is not a supply of free older labourers but a kind of contract in which resources (for training and support services) must be provided and due acknowledgement made to the contribution of older people.

At a more formally academic level, which normally requires the co-operation of different agencies, professional training may be arranged specifically for older people, giving them a qualification for research, perhaps especially on older people's issues. One example is of a university (Lancaster) certified/charity (Counsel and Care) sponsored certificate which led to the establishment of a co-operative professional research consortium of older people (OPRSI – Older People's Researching Social Issues). The research project included in the course was published in 2003 under the title 'Homing in on Housing: a Study of Housing Decisions of People aged over 60', and there have been a number of other projects since, in such areas as Alcohol and Ageing, Home Care and Re-enablement, Residential Care Homes and Hospital Discharge.

In summary, the claim of this paper is that there are many forms of activity available to older people which are educational in the broad sense of the term.

Although formal education is not my concern here, it is clear that life-long learning should be funded more adequately and that there should be wider opportunities for older people to take university and further education courses. There should also be scope for them to participate in teaching where appropriate eg by removing the OU ageist policy of refusing to consider anyone of 64 or over for tutoring posts.

Other more formal educational possibilities include the recording of experiences (a fund of knowledge) and training as researchers, especially in areas of importance to older people where empathy matters.

Serious consultation ie that in which outcomes are at least influenced by the consultation (not the big conversation!) will also stimulate mental energies. Empty processes weaken clients and breed cynicism.

Control over significant areas of one's personal life eg individual care budgets is also empowering and enlightening, as is participation in the designs of buildings or facilities which one uses.

Voluntary work, as described, can play a significant educational role. So can campaigning, on rural Post Offices, pensions, hospital standards or whatever.

All of this is set within the context of a larger debate about ageing and the changing demographic character of society. The value base of my argument – whether on leisure or education or social care – rests upon a positive conception of older people. It assumes that their lives have meaning and are worth recording, and that social policy can help develop capacities and awaken appetites. And, of course, much of this happens in the normal course of community life. Age limits don't apply accurately to real life: we don't fade suddenly at 60 or 65. As Brecht once wrote, you can make a new start with your final breath⁷.



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Notes:

1. For example, in a local consultation, Age Concern Norfolk asked older people, through various conduits, about their befriending needs. They were given a set of questions to answer, thereby identifying their befriending needs precisely. Such consultations help us to discover the real situation, but they are only very minor educative forms.

2. Article in Ageing and Society,

3. “‘Payback time’: community volunteering among older adults as a transformative mechanism”, Ageing and Society, Vol. 25, Part 4, July 2005, pp 567-584.

4. Ibid, p577.

5. Ibid, p582.

6. Ibid, p578. The phrases I have quoted are quoted by the author from two articles by J Mezirow, on transformative theory.

LATER-LIFE LEARNING AND WISDOM

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Past approaches to learning in later life have recurrently associated it with the pursuit of wisdom, traditionally considered one of the highest aims to pursue during a human life course as well as the supreme product of education itself. Attempting to deepen capacities and experience in relation to wisdom was, until the advent of changes which gathered force in the nineteenth century, held to enhance satisfaction with the life course, benefiting both individuals and society in general. Wisdom has been thought of differently in different cultures and at different times, but versions influential in the West have interpreted it in relation to knowledge, tacit or explicit, about how to respond to other people, oneself, and problems which are likely to arise in life but which lack straightforward solutions. Wisdom has been seen as in part practical knowledge, based on a range of emotional, social and ethical capacities and experience, and oriented to the common good. Achieving wisdom might offer consolation for 'pains of ageing', for older people might hope to develop capacities for wise insight less often displayed by those who are younger. This would endow their personal life-courses with additional meaning and, at the same time, assist others in confronting problems they might face. Without making sense of ideas such as wisdom, which accentuate forms of learning positively associated with age, the social status of older people seems unlikely to improve radically.

Illustrating the power of the concept of wisdom, the paper explores evidence showing something of what it has meant in former times. But there are a number of obstacles in the way of reconstructing this idea, and the paper, secondly, suggests some reasons for the eclipse it has suffered. It contends that these reasons cast light both on the meaning of the term and on some relative disadvantages associated with older age in contemporary societies. These obstacles need to be overcome in order to recover crucial practical and conceptual tools for making sense of ageing and of what can be learned in later life.

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At various stages in the past, people of wisdom – often, older people - have been reputed to offer significant resources to society. Attaining wisdom as an integral element of life-long learning was for centuries considered one of the highest aims possible for a human life. Wisdom was thought of as incorporating the most profound understanding human beings could achieve (even though perhaps not everyone might be able to attain it in equal degree), as well as the most desirable forms of human behaviour. Wisdom represented human beings' highest conceptions of themselves, of God, or what they most admired. Today, such regulative ideas of perfection or optimality often encounter suspicion: they may seem to endorse theoretical or practical inflexibility, intolerance, or an ideological narrowness incompatible with the arrangements of

liberal societies and their desire to acknowledge differing rationalities and forms of life. But we argue that the search for wisdom in decision-making and making sense of human reality remains a basic personal and cultural concern – particularly insofar as individuals, groups or societies desire to live well rather than content themselves with mere survival or continuous crisis-management. Living (and dying) well, on this view, requires wisdom. Not only this, but wisdom has a special importance for later life stages. It is a form of learning which may be expected to develop continuously with age, offering intrinsic and practical satisfactions to those who develop it, as well as to some degree protecting their social standing.

In the search for a tolerant rather than an ideologically rigid form of wisdom, we must take into account that ‘wisdom’ is a word with many meanings – some mutually compatible, some hardly at all. It has an extremely long and highly complex ongoing history. Ignoring these considerations would itself be unwise. But contemporary theories of wisdom, mainly developed in connection with psychology, pay minor tribute to the complexity of past theories. For the most part, their interest remains focused on present-day empirical research. It is true that psychologists such as Sternberg, Baltes and Staudinger, with their respective research groups, have acknowledged philosophical or theological wisdom traditions as part of their cultural heritage; Baltes even attempted an unpublished and unfinished reconstruction of their genesis. All these, however, ignore the rhetorical theories of wisdom which deeply influenced the Western humanist or encyclopaedist traditions of education and learning, not to mention historical interplays between philosophy and rhetoric concerning education (*paideia*) and the role of wisdom in it. We regard these traditions as crucial for an understanding of sapiential rationality. We also believe that closer examination of the history of wisdom in the West reveals not only a broader phenomenological basis than is now generally accepted; it also uncovers internal tensions in the understanding of wisdom as it develops over time. Wisdom, we contend, is an intrinsically dramatic concept: different interacting themes predominate as social and historical settings change. It is one which seems crucial to conceptualising learning in later life.

This is by no means to dismiss contemporary approaches. The psychologist Sternberg, for example, presents a ‘balance theory’ of practical wisdom. He defines wisdom as the application of tacit knowledge, typically acquired from experience rather than formal instruction, and mediated by ethical values toward the goal of achieving a common good through balancing among multiple intrapersonal, interpersonal, and extra-personal interests. Because wisdom is to be found in the interaction of person and situation, information processing in and of itself is not wise or unwise, for Sternberg (1998); its degree of wisdom depends on the fit of the solution to its context. Baltes and Staudinger (2000), in contrast, accentuate the attribution of wisdom to people who show, in their psychological make-ups, exceptional understanding of self and others, together with learning from experience, good communication skills, a commitment to personal growth, open-mindedness, emotional maturity, and empathy; they possess good reasoning ability, sagacity, and perspicacity. Baltes and Staudinger believe that wisdom pre-eminently involves the type of person one is and the life-experience one has; given both of these it generally increases over time. For them, a wise person should ‘have a greater tolerance of ambiguity’, ‘a greater tendency to refrain from pursuing closure on problems’; he or she is ‘open-minded and flexible’, and interested in ‘the establishment of social contact and associated empathy’.

Such contemporary accounts of wisdom do in fact reflect aspects of more ancient traditions. They nonetheless considerably curtail the broad cognitive, affective and practical scope presupposed, for instance, by Cicero’s classical definition of wisdom as ‘knowledge of human and divine things’ bearing fruit in action, and marked by differently disposed constituents in different situations. In the past, wisdom frequently involved an understanding of reality as a whole, or some form of religious or metaphysical belief, or scepticism of metaphysics; it was connected with ethics, political activity and an art of speaking and deliberation. But wisdom may subsequently have become stripped of some of its major tensions – whether or not its inherent

contradictions. Moreover, current psychological accounts tend not to enquire in detail into what constitutes, say, ethical insight or a concern for the common good. Our contemporary views of wisdom seem to have become pared down, perhaps so far as to obscure the complexity of the phenomena involved.

But a plethora of diverse theories of wisdom can be found in Western Graeco-Roman, Hebrew or Christian traditions, not to mention other cultures. Far from a single idiosyncratic agglomeration, diachronic and synchronic connections and disconnections can be detected in 'wisdom' which tell us what humans have variously thought of themselves qua humans. It therefore seems reasonable to employ some of the criteria for identifying, describing and ordering theories of wisdom which were used in these traditions - and during the history of the subject which bears 'wisdom' in its name: philosophy.

These refer to

The subject of wisdom – Who is wise?

The content of wisdom – what is it about?

The aim/perfection of wisdom

Types of activity/disposition constitutive of wisdom

Contexts of wisdom

Varieties of wisdom.

Highly diverse accounts have been given of each of these aspects (whereas contemporary versions focus on rather few of them). Differences or closeness between these answers mark out different or related theories. They also reveal tensions and (sometimes deliberate) contradictions between them.

Our approach to classification is intended to act as a method for sharpening perceptions of certain elements. Most theories classified in a certain way could also be divided along other lines: no system of classifying ideas is or should be watertight. This reflects the fact that people usually do not think in consistent, one-dimensional boxes unless taught to do so: they usually respond to circumstances in more creative ways. Therefore many categories of wisdom-types can be shown to have other types mixed with them. Moreover, in real life, different ideas of wisdom have been attached to different forms of living, such as the mediaeval *vita contemplativa* of monks or nuns, the *vita activa* of citizens or the *vita mixta* of mendicant friars or secular scholars. To live an active life but to remain contemplative in action (*in actione contemplativus*) was the motto guiding the education to wisdom espoused by early modern Jesuits. Such ideas have allowed people to form understandings of reality as a whole, and how to behave in it, which made substantial intellectual and practical differences to the composition of their life-span developments and their impacts on their surroundings. Importantly, this might take place without automatically excluding other people's positions as foolish or unwise. Different varieties of wisdom were formed, corresponding to different varieties of people and their life courses.

There is not space here to detail the contents of all the categories emerging from our project, merely to point to some debates and conclusions which they indicate. In the past, for example, the question: Who is wise? (enquiring about the subject of wisdom) yielded a series of competing replies, depending on the strictness of theoretical or practical limiting conditions guiding the choice of answer. Leaving aside for now analogous uses of the term (attributing wisdom to owls, books or the seasons), it is mostly persons who are called wise in the literal sense. When we refer to persons nowadays, we mean human persons. But traditionally speaking, Gods, angels or human beings were called 'persons', though not all were termed 'wise', at least not in the same sense. The more perfections one regards as entailed in the notion of wisdom, the more unlikely it is that humans can reach it. Similarly to Platonic and Augustinian traditions of theology, Immanuel Kant, for instance, denied on purely philosophical grounds that humans could ever achieve wisdom in the strict sense. For Kant, the concept of wisdom designates the highest form of knowledge of everything which is directed to the ultimate, absolute end or highest good. He

believed that Reason itself contains such a high idea of wisdom that no one except a highest being (*ens summum*), simultaneously the highest intelligence (*summa intelligentia*), omnipotent and willing whatever is good (*summum bonum*), could rightfully represent it. But this was not the only answer Kant supplied, since it would have excluded the desire for wisdom as anything that could be humanly achieved. Adopting a quotation from Horace (*Epodes*), he saw the motto ‘*Sapere aude*’ – which he translated as ‘*Sey weise*’ (Be wise) – as marking the task of a population seeking to practise enlightenment: ‘emergence of man from his self-imposed immaturity’ (Kant, 1784). Hence, not one being only, but some if not all (human) persons might potentially become wise, in Kant’s view through the use of philosophical enquiry.

This broad division between wisdom as a perfection attributable to the divine, and wisdom as something in principle attainable by human beings, is crucial. Far from assuming that perfectionism has disappeared in contemporary life, we suggest that the twentieth century witnessed the elevation of a secular version of this idea, in the form of an ideal of ‘scientific’ and exclusively cognitive objectivity in knowledge of human affairs. Our own account of wisdom returns to the ‘a-perfectionist’ side of this debate.

If we refer to the question about the aims of wisdom we can, for example, point to views which did not dissociate themselves from metaphysical / religious presuppositions but were nonetheless intensely practical and secular. These include pre-philosophical accounts of wisdom offered by the ancient Sumerians, Egyptians, Hebrews and the Pre-Socratics in Greece. These all emanated from an attempt to make sense of life as a whole, to see the right order of human action in terms of an understanding of the order of the world. Their communication was frequently based on oral traditions of education, complex and many-sided. Far from lost in the mists of time, rich wisdom traditions of this sort persist until the present day, not least in the Talmud, the Bible and in many Arabic, Celtic or other daily practices. These approaches to the idea of wisdom can help us to re-evaluate many everyday forms of behaviour – those based on particular social customs, for instance - which might otherwise appear irrational in terms of ‘perfectionist’ criteria. It is possible to reconstruct the sense behind these operations and defend them as reasonable and plausible.

But, most importantly, we argue that in terms of suitability for the twenty-first century, use should be made one of the oldest traditions of education and erudition in our Western culture, one sometimes fused with philosophical traditions, but frequently ignored or even rejected by them. It formed the backbone of Graeco-Roman *paideia* and humanist education up to the 20th century. This is the rhetorical tradition. It brings us to concepts of wisdom which highlight its practical, deliberative, ethical and emotional aspects, its embeddedness in social communication and the capacity to think and to speak in a strikingly adequate way within areas of human action and practical decision-making. All of these aspects make these theories of wisdom directly relevant for present-day purposes. They also have clear connections with contributions which can be offered by people in older age.

Since the time of the Greek sophists, but particularly since the days of Isocrates, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, both rhetoric and philosophy claimed precedence when it came to education. Both were guided by differing - and rarely uncontroversial - ideals of wisdom as the goal of their training. Unlike many philosophers or philosophical schools, outstanding teachers of rhetoric identified wisdom with the goal of educating a free citizen within a political community, able to speak convincingly in public life. In this context, rhetoric was regarded as the cultivation of Language, Speech and Reason (*Logos*): cultivating one’s speech meant cultivating one’s reason. Isocrates and - later - Cicero, Quintilian, or the majority of humanists since Petrarch, emphasised that rhetoric and philosophy should not be considered mutually exclusive areas of study, since wisdom without the power to persuade is impractical whereas the power to persuade without wisdom is open to blatant abuse. In both cases, purported wisdom ends up as folly or deceptive demagoguery. The wisdom to be achieved instead concerns above all the practical and political

realm in which people attempt to live well. Hence, rhetoric as the education of speech and reason is intrinsically related to the specific goal of humans' flourishing as free citizens within communities of people communicating about whatever promotes the good life or is detrimental to it. This same system of teaching should offer education both in right conduct and in good speech, in ethics as well as rhetoric. On this view, there is only one human capacity which really deserves the name of wisdom: the ability to discern and to communicate in a convincing manner whatever is best for the individual and communal life of human beings.

Aristotle's Rhetoric provides a first theory of rhetorical, practical rationality (or reasonableness) embodied in speech as a unity of the argument itself (logos), the ethos of the speaker (ethos) and the reaction of the audience (pathos), guided by logos. He collects rules (topoi) which can be used effectively in speeches and argumentation in public, in the Assembly, at festive gatherings of the city-state, or at Court. He discusses patterns of argumentation which lead to fallacy or deception and deals systematically with disposition, style and delivery. Against Aristotle himself, who divided wisdom predominantly into theoretical science, belonging to metaphysics, and prudence, part of ethics, and did not overtly discuss rhetorical reasoning as a suitable candidate for it, we believe that his considerations pave the way for a new and adequate understanding of the phenomenon of wisdom today.

In this vein Cicero too argued that 'wisdom' means what it meant 'in the good old days': an almost-encyclopaedic knowledge of divine and human affairs combined with moral excellence and the ability to give excellent advice on points of law as well as about marrying off a child, buying a farm, or conducting business in general. Scipio and Marcus Cato were the paradigms of such Sages (De Oratore III, 134f). For Cicero, a perfect orator must be a good person of integrity and supreme wisdom, combining high ethos with eloquence, motivated by his sense of public responsibility. He is a 'whole man'. The same applies to a wise person. Both have an essential role to play in the politics of the state. Ideally, they are one and the same person.

It will be these traditions, which derive their understanding of wisdom from a fusion of rhetoric and philosophy embedded in and geared to the practical life of a state or community, from which we may learn lessons essential for our own understanding of wisdom. At the same time, we can begin to understand why the idea of wisdom is less often embraced at present: it rejects the tenets of modern perfectionism.¹² For the purposes of this paper, we can summarise the problems wisdom seems to present for current thinking in terms of a) the synthesised nature of wise reasoning: it combines moral, social, emotional, interpersonal and cognitive aspects of thought, which 'perfectionists' reject; b) its interpersonal nature (Aristotle says it is the hearer that is the speech's end and object: it is hard for 'perfectionists' to see how this could be reasonable, precisely because it mixes ordinary human processes into the idea of human thought); and c) doubts arising from within our culture about the need for wise reasoning. Contemporary perfectionists prefer to resort to technical, scientific and other forms of 'expert' reasoning – ignoring more humane forms of experience and reflection which need to be put at the public service. This is a trend which needs to be reversed. Partly as a result of professionalisation in universities and schools, the idea of developing knowledge has become linked with the idea of education seen as addressed primarily to the young. Capacities for more historical, normative, context-dependent and dialogical 'wise' knowledge may indeed improve as people grow older. They are crucial capacities for the well-being, even the survival of our societies; we need to know much more about how to support their development.

¹² This has the effect that mixed forms of public decision-making, such as those involved in management, are often presented as unrealistically 'objective', while criteria they ought to aim to fulfil are ignored.

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LESSONS FROM THE GERMAN FEDERAL ACADEMY

Andrea Ehlert

Federal Academy For Cultural Education in Wolfenbuettel, Germany

The academy's goal is to promote cultural education, and thereby cultural development, in the society. Its main tool is the further education of professionals, semi-professionals, and volunteers in fields of work related to the exercise and communication of culture and the arts. By educating educators, it aims to professionalize cultural work.

Participants especially benefit from the academy's programme if they are working (or plan on working) in the field of cultural studies, cultural communication, or cultural administration, are looking for new knowledge and new skills to implement in their work, want to test their professional and personal skills and look for areas worth developing, are interested in the public political discourse about current questions of cultural politics and cultural development.

*So, embedded in a wide range of subjects, the academy holds classes to train trainers who work with adults/seniors in the fields of arts production and arts mediation, and offers consultation to those who plan working with seniors. The academy carries out public conferences in the context of seniors and culture work, i.e. in December 2005 the conference titled *Old Masters*. About role and place of seniors in culture and cultural education. In November 28 – 30, 2007 it will continue the subject with a conference titled *Old Masters – or - how seniors live and use competences in the field of cultural education.**

The curriculum of the Federal Academy is planned, organized and realized in the departments of Visual Arts, Literature and Writing, Music, Drama, Museum Communication, Presentation, Management and Organisation, Cultural and educational politics.

The academy held classes/lectures for seniors:

The head of the theatre division works with a senior players group and is specialized on theatre of and with older people.

- *In the fields of music you will find choir work with older people.*
- *The division devoted to museums specializes on volunteers in museums.*
- *The fine arts division invites seniors/older people to work in theory and practice of fine arts.*
- *The academy offers in-service educational seminars, public conferences, publications (Wolfenbuettel Academy Documents; newsletters via e-mail), events, consultation, and event service.*

The academy is member of the age-culture.net, which is a Special Interest Group of the SEN@ER - Silver Economy Network of European Regions. Lower Saxony, location of the academy, is member of SEN@ER.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE EDUCATION FOR PARTICIPATION COURSE HELD IN THE WEST OF SCOTLAND IN AUTUMN 2006

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Abstract

The innovative Education for Participation course was developed and piloted in 2001 by the team at the Royal Bank of Scotland Centre for the Older Person's Agenda. The aims of the course were to:

- ❑ *Support professionals in developing their skills to feel confident in facilitating partnership working with older people*
- ❑ *Ensure that service providers take account of older people's opinions through working in partnership with older people themselves*
- ❑ *Maximise older people's contribution to partnership working to ensure that their voices are heard and are effective.*

The course comprised of four units, that could be attended as a block of four or individually: 1. Drama for democracy 2. Helping older people to tell their stories 3. Deciphering documents 4. Hearing the voices of older people in formal arenas.

Participants were a mix of older people and professionals who wish to develop their skills in shaping policy and services for older people.

This paper is drawn from the post course evaluations of the Education for Participation, 2006 Course that was run twice between October and November 2006 in the West of Scotland.

Method: *The post course questionnaire was distributed on the second day of each unit. This questionnaire contained ten open questions; these were used to elicit as much information as possible from the respondees. Of the 100 questionnaires distributed, 66 participants responded.*

Results: *Responses from the participants will be used in this presentation to demonstrate the benefit and impact of the course. From the responses, it appears that all participants in the four units received some benefits from the course, but the types of benefits and the responses given were as diverse as the participants themselves. The positive responses far outweighed the negative responses. Moreover, when asked what they regretted about the course several stated that their main regret was that they had not attended the other units or that the course did not last longer. The main response from participants regarding all of the units was that they found the course useful and informative. In fact, both professionals and older people felt the course to be a success and that they learned a lot from it. The presentation will have input from Sheila McNeill who will explain the impact of the course and some of the opportunities as a result.*

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Introduction

There has been an emphasis in recent policy documents of involving older people in the planning and delivery of services with relevance to them and within the research process (DoH 1999, 2001; Scottish Executive, 2000). In a review undertaken in 2001 by Jee et al (2001) it was identified that insufficient attention is paid to preparing older people for their involvement within primary care development. In a later review of public involvement undertaken by Ridley and

Jones, (2002) one of the key recommendations was that for involvement to be realised, educational and training needs of all stakeholders must not only be acknowledged but also resourced. Dewar et al (2003) and Dewar, (2004) have also clearly identified that health care professionals may also feel insufficiently prepared for their role in facilitating such involvement and partnership working.

Patient Focus and Public Involvement (Scottish Executive, 2001) states that NHS Scotland should be a 'patient-focused service that exists for the patient' and should provide 'a service where individuals, groups and communities are involved in improving the quality of care, influencing priorities and in planning services'. Add to this an environment where 'it is clear that in the future older people are going to account for a substantially larger proportion of the population than they have to date' (Wood and Bain, 2001) i.e. by 2031 there will be an increase of around 75% of people aged over 75+ and an increase of around 40% of people aged between 60-74 (Shaw, 2004), then both professionals and older people need to have the ability to communicate and work in partnership.

The innovative Education for Participation course was developed and piloted in 2001 by the team at the Royal Bank of Scotland Centre for the Older Person's Agenda (funded by Queen Margaret University College's Widening Access Fund). The course was run a further four times, (funded by a mixture of funding bodies, including NHS Health Scotland and Lloyds TSB) in Edinburgh in 2003, Inverness in 2004, in the Scottish Borders in 2005 and finally in West of Scotland (West Dunbartonshire and Glasgow) (funded by NHS Education Scotland). The aims of the course were to:

- Support professionals in developing their skills to feel confident in facilitating partnership working with older people
- Ensure that service providers take account of older people's opinions through working in partnership with older people themselves
- Maximise older people's contribution to partnership working to ensure that their voices are heard and are effective.

Each unit was undertaken by staff from Queen Margaret University. They were run in a workshop format and aimed to develop confidence as well as knowledge.

The course comprised of four units, that could be attended as a block of four or individually. These were:

- Drama for democracy, used a mixture of techniques from the arts to explore together some different ways of expressing their point of view and influencing change in positive way.
- Helping older people to tell their stories. The stories of older people are of great interest to health and social care workers, researchers and those who develop policy. The unit therefore covered ways of gathering relevant information and gain an understanding of research skills, for example through a questionnaire or interview.
- Deciphering documents is aimed at enabling participants to consider, discuss and evaluate what makes a useful written publication and evaluate and respond to current documents relating to services for older people.
- Hearing the voices of older people in formal arenas, looked at developing running and participating in a range of different meetings and groups. It was also aimed at helping participants to feel more confident in working together to share their views and experiences to develop services for older people.

Participants were a mix of older people and professionals who wish to develop their skills in shaping policy and services for older people.

This presentation is drawn from the post course evaluations of the Education for Participation (200 course that was run twice between October and November 2006 in the West of Scotland (in Bowling Public Hall and the Trades Hall in Glasgow). Responses from the participants will be used in this presentation to demonstrate the benefit and impact of the course.

Method

The pre-course questionnaire ascertained the demographic details of the participants and also the reasons they had for choosing the different units. These responses will provide the background to the presentation. The post course questionnaire was distributed on the second day of each unit. This questionnaire contained ten open questions; these were used to elicit as much information as possible from the respondees. .

Results

Of the 100 pre and post course questionnaires distributed, 53 responded to the pre course and 66 participants responded to the post course. To demonstrate the benefit and impact of the course, the responses from the participants will be used.

Demographics: The table below illustrates the number of people who attended each unit and the number of professionals and older people in each unit. Five participants (two older people and three professionals) attended all four units.

	Overall number of Participants	Professionals	Older People
Drama for Democracy	28	22	6
Helping Older People to Tell Their Stories	29	21	8
Deciphering Documents	23	13	10
Hearing the Voices of Older People in Formal Arenas	20	15	5

Pre course questionnaire responses

The following demographic details and responses are taken from the pre course questionnaires.

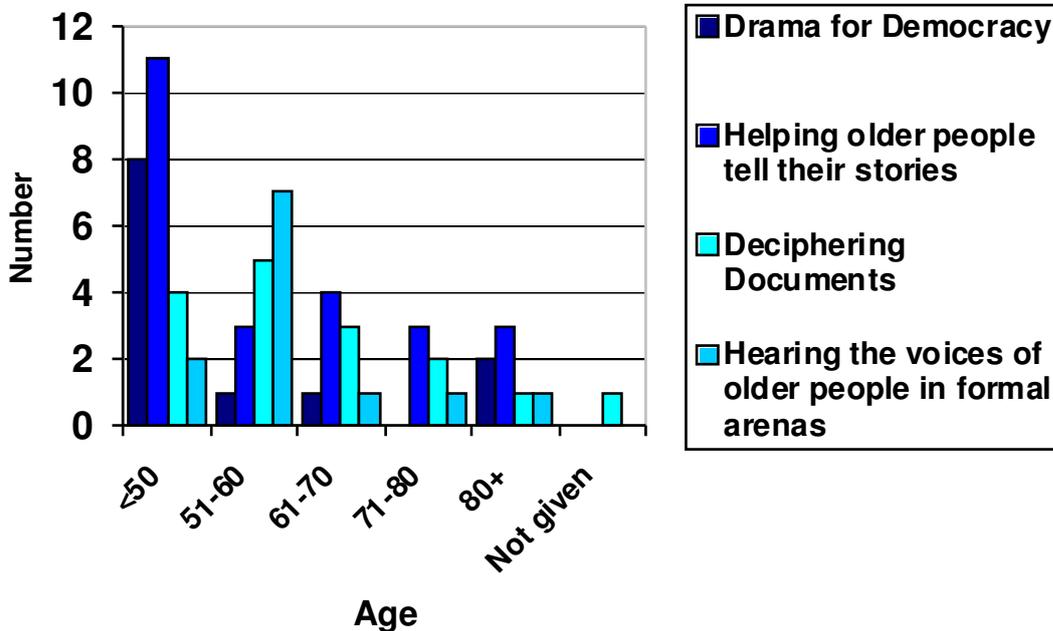
Age distribution of attendees over the two courses

There was a wide age range from those aged less than 50 years old to participants aged over 80 years old. This meant that older people could learn from younger people and vice versa

“I learned the views of younger professionals and of my fellow older colleagues at the discussions”.

One response from the unit “Helping older people to tell their stories” was

“The real “stars” were the elderly participants”



However, as can be seen from the graph, a large proportion of the participants were aged 50 and under and it is noted that possibly when recruiting for the next courses older people should be targeted.

The pre course questionnaire also asked participants why they decided to come on the course (if it was for information, to gain new skills, to have fun, to meet new people or to feel more confident in working with professionals). The table shows the number of participants responding to each question.

	Drama for democracy	Helping older people tell their stories	Deciphering documents	Hearing the voices of older people
For information	10	19	7	4
To gain new skills	12	18	7	5
To have fun	2	6	2	6
To meet new people	4	12	3	6
To feel more confident in working with professionals	1	5	3	3
Other:				
<i>Make new friends</i>		1		
<i>Had some free time</i>			1	
<i>Improve work with elderly people</i>		1		

The majority of the attendees came on the course for information and to gain new skills, although a significant number came to meet new people and have fun.

In what ways do you feel that this course will help you when working in partnership with older people/organisations?

There were many different responses given to this question, possibly again reflecting the different employment backgrounds and experience of the participants. Some of the participants felt that the course would raise their confidence, while the majority of others felt that the course would help them improve skills (discussion skills, managing paperwork, working with older people etc) and gain more knowledge. Others felt it would help them increase confidence.

Which units did you choose and why?

As expected, the reasons for choosing the units varied depending on the unit chosen. Examples of the reasons people chose the units are given below:

Drama for democracy

- “To widen my horizons.”
- “I do find it difficult to speak out in very public situations.”
- “To gain info and increase participation skills.”
- “To look at other ways to assist and support people express views.”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “Very relevant in our befriending project.”
- “I wanted to gain more skills in how I can help older people to be involved in the process of changing services.”
- “Think it is an interesting subject.”

Deciphering Documents

- “To develop my understanding of how older people can be involved in developing service provision.”
- “Hopefully useful in supporting older people one-to-one in our steering group.”
- “Improve knowledge for awareness of appropriate processes.”
- “Hopefully so I can not find the paperwork so challenging.”

Hearing the voice of older people in formal arenas

- “To develop skills to get most from meetings/consultations. These are expensive exercises and should be productive and information for planning.”

Post Course questionnaire responses

The post course questionnaire contained 10 questions, this presentation will focus on the responses to two of the questions: namely “What did you ‘get out of’ and/or learn from taking part in the course” and “what did you like, dislike and regret about the course”. These two questions have been selected as they are most applicable to this presentation.

What did you ‘get out of’ and/or learn from taking part in the course?

The benefits people got out of each unit was a mixture of personal development and practical advice. In the drama unit, the outcome for participants focused on personal development for

example “I feel more confident talking to others”. Similarly, in the ‘Helping older people to tell their stories’ unit, “Another side to interviewing. Confidence as the course proceeded.” The more practical comments related to particular skills gained from the units, for example, in relation to ‘Deciphering Documents’, “I feel I have learned things I can share with other people.” Lastly in the ‘Hearing the voices of older people in formal arenas’ unit practical skills that could be used by participants in the future were highlighted “A lot of ideas about how to really involve older people rather than a token consultation; points of information about the needs of people with visual impairments.”

Further examples are given below.

Drama for democracy

- “Learned to listen and consider other people’s opinions.”
- “Tremendous good fun – and a strong sense of the need to understand yourself before you can influence others.”
- “The reminder of the importance of interactive skills.”
- “Loads. Especially how to encourage persons to participate; to be aware of who is reluctant (and why) and to especially involve them.”
- “Made me more aware of signs - body/visual/vocal (tones/words spoken etc.)”
- “Consider different perspectives and working in a group – more beneficial.”
- “I had fun and enjoyment myself. I think I learned a bit more about myself and was surprised at how non-threatening drama can be and how I was able to get into it despite my lack of confidence and self-esteem.”
- “A deeper understanding of people; how they think, behave and respond.”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “I enjoyed hearing others’ experiences, and being helped to analyse the problems of aging by the tutor.”
- “Learnt more of the ‘detail’, pitfalls, responsibilities of interviewers.”
- “Different from any other course I have been on.”
- “A huge amount. So what if I’ve to work passed 60 or 65 or 70, from experiencing such contact with many people older than me, they are as said ‘just ordinary people’ doing what people do, and we’ll probably all be doing the same in 20, 30, 40 years time, if still around.”
- “Never assume regarding older people, made up of individuals.”
- “I learned different ways in which to further communicate with older people. I learned to try and remember to read between the lines when collecting information.”
- “The fact that you can get very rich detailed accounts from people through listening to their stories as opposed to structured interviews.”
- “That storytelling is a valuable tool for me to represent the views/opinions of older people.”
- “Remember that older people have a lifetime of experience.”

Deciphering documents

- “How to read more quickly and get an understanding of documents; in particular this will be useful for consultation documents.”
- “Very positive, would feel a lot more equipped and confident to tackle barriers around involvement in more formal settings.”
- “Increased awareness of the importance of older people participating in the development of services for their age group.”
- “I wanted to be able to pick out relevant documents to read and give constructive comments for consultation. These aspects were met”
- “Useful hints to follow when commenting and reading formal documents.”
- “Shortcuts when reading documents, and helpful tips for writing documents.”
- “Better ways of communicating/listening and a more effective response to consultations.”

Hearing the voices of older people in formal arenas

- “Updated knowledge in a friendly atmosphere making it a pleasure to attend.”
- “Learned the views of younger professionals and of my fellow older colleagues at the discussions.”
- “Lots of tips; lots of thoughts to make my work contact with older people more appropriate; ideas for myself as an older person to participate in local meetings/public consultation.”
- “A greater understanding, knowledge and insight into hearing voices from older people in formal arenas.”
- “Learnt a great deal about meetings etc, with lots of reminders. Enjoyed hearing the older participants.”
- “An enhanced sense of how to plan a meeting taking into older peoples needs and requirements as well as a better understanding of how to involve older people.”
- “I felt it gave me some small appreciation of what it must feel like as an older person trying to engage in formal arenas.”

What did you?

Like?

Examples of the responses to this question are given below. A number of participants from each of the four units expressed that they liked everything about the unit. Also many enjoyed the participatory aspect of the workshops.

Drama for Democracy

- “Everything.”
- “Carrying out the scenarios.”
- “Participation – getting to know each other.”
- “Light approach but getting the message across.”
- “Enjoyed group work.”
- “Very interesting, entertaining and a good way of learning.”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “The mix of people/the opportunity to get an older persons perspective.”
- “The chance to participate in the focus group, really enjoyable.”
- “Hearing peoples stories and having the time to listen.”
- “Format, discussion, workshops.”
- “The way we all worked together.”
- “Everything.”

Deciphering Documents

- “Sufficient time allowed to each activity.”
- “Presentation on elibrary/chance to meet participants.”
- “Everything”
- “Participation and information.”
- “Mix of activities, informality of setting, mix of older people and workers.”
- “The presenters were well organised and as well as delivering their agenda were willing to ‘learn’ from the participants.”
- “Other peoples point of view.”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “The relaxed/informal atmosphere.”
- “Welcome approach of facilitator and co-facilitator and involvement.”
- “Whole course.”
- “Exchange of views.”
- “The final day when we acted the parts in a “real meeting”.”

Dislike?

A number expressed that they did not dislike any part of the units. While others did not like having to participate in some of the elements.

Drama for Democracy

- “Nothing”
- “Presentation.”
- “Having to individually speak out.”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “I found the role playing difficult”
- “Did not actively dislike any of it.”

Deciphering Documents

- “Some subjects not useful for me”
- “Nothing”
- “Felt slightly repetitive.”

Hearing the voices of older people in formal arenas

- “Nothing”
- “The first day, dealing with basics, was a bit boring if one knew these roles.”

Regret?

When asked what they regretted about the units several expressed that they regretted not attending other units in the course or that they did not participate as fully as they could have.

Drama for Democracy

- “That I can’t do more.”
- “It couldn’t last longer.”
- “My lack of ability at drama.”
- “That I did not give as much as I probably could have.”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “Not giving as much of myself as I would like/normally do.”
- “Nothing”

Deciphering Documents

- “Sorry to miss one unit due to other commitments.”
- “Nothing”

Helping older people to tell their stories

- “Would have liked to contribute more but often afraid of appearing silly.”

Conclusion

From the responses, it appears that all participants in the four units received some benefits from the course, but the types of benefits and the responses given were as diverse as the participants themselves. The positive responses far outweighed the negative responses. Moreover, when asked what participants regretted about the course several stated that their main regret was that they had not attended the other units or that the course did not last longer. The main response from participants regarding all of the units was that they found the course useful and informative. In fact, both professionals and older people felt the course to be a success and that they learned a lot from it.

To gain a full understanding of the impact of the course the best person to hear from is someone who attended the course. Therefore one of the students from the course will give a personal reflective account of her experiences.

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THEN, NOW AND AFTER... LEARNERS' REFLECTIONS ON A LIFETIME OF LEARNING

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Abstract

This paper reports on the first of a two-year study entitled 'Older adults' engagement with further and higher education in the West of Scotland: Tracking educational journeys', commencing in August 2006. The project is funded by West of Scotland Wider Access Forum (West Forum), one of four Wider Access Forums in the country; these are in turn financed by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC). This empirical research, the first of its kind in the country, builds on a literature review, including analysis of local participation data.

While the study involves tracking students for a period of two years by way of bi-annual interviews, this paper will focus on findings obtained from the first interviews carried out in December '06/January '07. In this initial phase we explore learners' perspectives on their educational histories, their current formal learning experiences, and their projected learning futures. Stereotypically atypical as older learners in formal education, it is those students who reside in areas of high deprivation that are the project's point of focus. Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the project engages with adults from DZ4 and DZ5 areas: those West of Scotland areas rated as being the 40% most deprived, and as such, sits firmly within a social justice paradigm. Focussing on the 'now', we examine students' current learning in the context of prior educational experience and future plans: the multi-faceted areas of their life in which they aspire to reap reward, and the diversity of knowledge and skills that they hope to acquire. We also report on students' evaluation of the learning achieved throughout their study to date; and their perception of its wider life value and/or influences.

The study aims to contribute to understanding the dynamics of learning in later adulthood, specifically of older adults (defined arbitrarily as post-50 years) in Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) in Scotland. Governments around the world, including ours in Scotland (which argues for greater inclusion of previously marginalised older (adult) students within HEIs and Colleges), are increasingly emphasising the need for an ever-enhanced performance from formal education institutions in terms of student recruitment, retention, and progression for a wider cross-section of society. In view of this, we examine these issues from a student perspective; looking at their motivations for commencing learning, their sources of motivation for (or barriers to) completion, and conceptions of what constitutes learning 'progression'.

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*After completing her Masters in Adult & Continuing Education at University of Glasgow, **Sarah McCullough** is researching formal learning in later life in the West of Scotland. Tracking ~85 older learners in local Colleges and HEIs, this empirical research follows a literature review and data analysis of older learners' local participation.*

This paper reports on selected findings from the first of a two-year study entitled 'Older adults' engagement with further and higher education in the West of Scotland: Tracking educational journeys', commencing in August 2006. The project is funded by West of Scotland Wider Access Forum (West Forum), in response to their identification of older adults as a target group for wider

access initiatives. This empirical research, the first of its kind in the country, builds on a literature review, including analysis of local participation data.

This initial project phase aims to capture learners' perspectives on their educational histories, their current formal learning experiences, and their projected learning futures. Stereotypically unusual as older learners in formal education, it is those students who reside in areas of high deprivation that are the project's point of focus. Using the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), the project primarily engages with adults from Deprivation Zones 4 and 5: those areas rated as being among the 40% most deprived in the country.

Conceptually, the study links with several areas of adult education literature: critical educational gerontology (especially the links between social class, the role of the state and education); (older) adult participation in formal education; policy and its impacts on older adult education; social inclusion and widening access and participation in education. It is proactively linked to social justice for older adults, because the recruitment of older adults to this research is from officially identified areas of deprivation in the West of Scotland. Its primary purpose is to depict older adults' connections with further and higher education within their wider life realities.

Among the depictions of the lifecourse, that of prominent educational gerontologist, Peter Laslett has been particularly influential. In his well-known book, *A fresh map of life* (1989), he writes of four major phases or ages: in the first age of life, one of early socialisation, a person is heavily dependent on others, usually parents; the second age is one of adult maturity in which typically individuals take on increased responsibilities of social relationships, career development, perhaps childrearing and financial autonomy. In the third age, there are renewed opportunities available to adults free from the constraints of the second age; it is a time for exercising greater freedom and creativity, sometimes suppressed in the "peak" of life when duties and obligations to work took precedence. In the fourth and final age, a person prepares for death and may once again be dependent, as in the first age. Arguably, this portrayal of later life is highly romanticised, classist and sexist (in that captures mainly a male reality), but Laslett's typology does allow us to think of older adults in a positive light, away from ageist, outdated stereotypes of older people as decrepit, frail and dependent on society.

Eighty-six project participants have been drawn from seven institutions across the West of Scotland: four Colleges (situated in community, suburban and rural settings) and three Universities (categorised as 'ancient', 'post-1992', and the Open University). Those eligible for participation in the study were over the age of 50, and enrolled in participating institutions at the time of selection. Postcodes were used to confirm residency within an area of high deprivation: the prime criterion for selection. A range of students on credit and non-credit-bearing courses was selected, with a no greater gender ratio than 3:2 (either sex in majority). Participants were invited via institutional processes while maintaining their anonymity in accord with University ethical standards.

Focussing on the 'now', we examine students' current learning in the context of prior educational experience and future plans: the multi-faceted areas of their lives in which they aspire to reap reward, and the diversity of knowledge and skills that they hope to acquire. We also report on students' evaluation of the value and/or influence of the learning to date; personally, and in their wider lives. In the following interpretation of three brief learner biographies, we make connections with the wider sample and pertinent literature. Students' names have been changed to protect anonymity.

Clare, 52:

I'd better do something...Just before my life finishes. It's either that or stay in a dead end job for the rest of my life.

Clare remarks that the above realisation played a significant part in her decision to return to learning. Leaving her jobs as a factory worker and bar maid, she is now studying on an Access course in a community-based college, through the Scottish Wider Access Programme (SWAP). Access programmes are usually full-time, year-long courses based in Colleges or Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and which are tailored for mature students with outdated or no qualifications, in preparation for higher education. Successful completion can lead to a guaranteed place on an HN or degree course in a relevant subject area.

Clare's fees are waived because of her low income. She receives a total allowance of £546 per month to cover all living and study costs, which is subsidised by a part-time job one night per week. She states that financial considerations did not act as a barrier to engagement, in the knowledge that funding was available.

Clare currently works eight hours a week as a taxi dispatcher, and other than a 12-week college course on Commerce more than 20 years ago (arranged by the Job Centre), this is the first programme that she has taken since leaving school. She feels that her experiences at school and corresponding home life have had little influence on her attitude towards education.

When asked about her motivation for going back to study, she comments that she became aware of the choice to escape from her current job (cit. above). She is fully committed to completing and describes her main source of motivation as herself. When asked about the key reasons for taking her course, she states:

I'd say it was just for the stimulation. As I said, I was sick fed up in factories, everybody talking down to you and you're going to be there for the rest of your life.

Her end goal for the learning reaches into the medium term: successful entry onto, and completion of a degree course. She says that she has found the learning extremely valuable but struggles to articulate why, anticipating that it will be 'valuable in the long run...at the moment it seems miles and miles away'. This programme is a pre-emptive step towards her goals of a degree and new career, in the awareness of the potential extra working time provided by the eradication of mandatory retirement ages within the European Employment (Age) Regulations (2006).

Despite these clear goals, Clare expresses a degree of ambivalence about her academic capabilities:

...I never ever thought I would be able to do psychology and sociology, philosophy. Sometimes you come out of the class and your head's more puzzled than it is when you went in... I'd like to go to university; I'd like to study criminology. Only time will tell if I've got the brains for it.

John, 60:

'Come here, what are you doing? You can do better.'

John is studying at a Glasgow-based university. Now, as before, his formal learning is wholly vocationally driven. Having left school at the age of 15 and commencing work immediately afterwards, he returned to school at around age 40 to gain the necessary entry qualifications for university. After 14 years of work, principally as a truck driver, he left his job with the support of his wife, and after completion of his Highers, went on directly to complete an MA at University

of Glasgow. He then continued with a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), completed around 1994, which enabled him to teach English at secondary level, a passion that stems from his own English teacher of his early teens.

Twelve years on from completing his PGCE, John's current course of learning is a part-time professional development programme, which is funded by his Local Education Authority. John works with pupils with behavioural problems, referred to him by other teachers in the school, a position that he has moved into from English teaching. He states that there were no barriers to his learning, but goes on to discuss his being denied Continuing Professional Development (CPD) several times in the context of his age. Approval for study on this course was gained on his insistence:

... when it came to my peer day review last year, I said 'Right, this is what I want. And I want it and I want it now'... I stuck my heels in. But they knew they did owe me. Everybody knew that...

John highlights the study of educational theorists' writings (for example, Stephen Brookfield) as being stimulating, challenging, and also of value in validating his professional practice and underlying beliefs. He rates the learning as having been 'very valuable' to him personally, through this associated stimulation arising from new (educational) concepts, and their interrelation with one another. Within his wider life, he states that the learning has been 'extremely valuable', through validating his existent stance on practice, through challenging him, and through the theory's acting as a point of reflection and ongoing development of his work.

Aside from the associated self-satisfaction of his job, his main aim is the development of practical, rather than academic skills:

...These kids need somebody, not necessarily me but somebody doing a job...to point them in the right direction. There is another way. You know, you don't have to go down the gang route, you don't have to go down the drug route...You get people who do it [training] for their own good. I'm not that type of person. I want to transfer that skill on to the kids, you know.

Janet, 55:

...the children leaving home... my daughter and son-in-law and girls have moved to Spain ...that decided me on the Spanish. The computing's really just for me and as I say the German is because my daughter-in-law speaks German...you feel as though you have to make the effort.

Currently enrolled in a credit-bearing Spanish course, and non-credit German, computing and yoga courses, Janet is attending a community-based outpost of a Glasgow College. She has been out of work for the last ten years, and receives incapacity benefit for depression, anxiety, and agoraphobia. She has no formal qualifications, and over the last few years, has been attending various part-time day courses in this community centre, such as salsa, and belly-dancing. Her re-engagement with formal learning has been encouraged by her siblings, as well as her children, for her sake, as well as her own motivation to be able to communicate in other languages for their sake. She states that her depression and associated anxiety have made participation difficult at times, and has previously left programmes due to feeling unable to leave her home.

She has found the learning very valuable to her personally, as a means of combating her depression. She finds the stimulus helpful with (English) speech capacity, and in motivating her to keep going:

...the depression really, it's like it kind of kills your dreams... [the learning] must make you feel motivated because I'm here... I got up at half past seven this morning to come here...normally you could lie in your bed until four in the afternoon because you don't really want to go out...

The learning has also been very valuable in her wider life, in helping her to get out of the house, and keep active. She has recently started attending a local woman's group, which she enjoys because of the ability to learn new things, and meets people from different cultures and backgrounds that she would normally have no opportunity to.

In the future, she intends to continue with the language classes, progressing to higher level learning if recommended by her tutors, and mentions the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) as a possibility. Her main aspirational reward from the learning is within the family, through easier communication with her children and their partners, and grandchildren when visiting.

Discussion

Educational Histories

The stories of the learners demonstrate education's contrasting position within people's lives at school and at school leaving age 'then', compared with 'today': for many project participants, schooling seems to have been seen almost as an irrelevant precursor to life, which began afterwards. This perception was perhaps compounded by a financial urgency, significant among many participants' family lives; appeased by a buoyant job market. The resultant impetus was to begin earning as soon as possible (often on turning 16), to contribute to family finance, so that post-compulsory education was often outside their frame of reference or indeed, their parameters of choice. Janet's own further learning and resultant career were sacrificed in order to care for younger siblings when her mother herself became unable. Unlike Clare, her current opportunities to pursue her deferred career choice are constrained by ongoing limiting mental illness, in saying 'I've lost all that with the bouts of depression'.

John's own learning demonstrates the different pathways often experienced by men and women. His career change, undertaken around the age of 40, crystallised through definitive emotional and financial support from his wife. His vocational move into a position in which he works intensively with teenagers identified as problematic by other teachers, is of a comparable tone to the influence of his own English teacher, who supported his love of literature with new material, while his father opposed it.

Laslett's (1989) typology is clearly problematic in consideration of the dominant themes in these people's life stages. For many in this cohort, career development and financial autonomy have yet to occur; and are still very clearly prevailing considerations. For others, learning is undertaken as a means of readjustment to flux in their wider lives – such as illness, cessation of work, or children moving away. For Janet, learning, while related to her family, is also undertaken for stimulation and mental wellbeing. Experiences of the learning are overwhelmingly positive however, with diverse reports of associated benefits of learning in both personal and wider lives.

Varied Learning Orientations

Adult education literature is replete with depictions of learning approaches and adults' motives for learning (e.g. Houle, 1961; Morstain & Smart, 1974; West, 1996; Sargant et al, 1997; Dench & Regan, 2000). Not much of this discourse has focussed on older adults, however. Given the philosophical diversity of older adult education provision (Elias & Merriam, 1995), it is not surprising to find that the reasons for participation of older people in formal learning are varied

and multi-dimensional. While the continuum of expressive versus instrumental motives for engagement with education is significant (see Findsen, 2005), this portrayal belies the complexity of older people's lives.

In the three cases described in this paper, the two women are in their early to mid 50s; the male approaching the traditional retirement age of 65. Clare sees her study as a chance to escape factory type work and to gain greater self-respect through achieving a 'proper career'. While she is ambivalent about her academic capabilities (not an unusual phenomenon for "returning" adult students (see McGivney, 1996), she is determined to make good in that of her life which remains. John, while initially tied to a working class job of truck driving, was equally determined to break out of its frustrations and made the sacrifice in mid-life to change career. In later adulthood, his focus has changed somewhat towards a contributive influence in terms of his interaction with young people. His primary motivation has been to develop greater effectiveness as a helper of disadvantaged youth. Finally, Janet has been swayed primarily by family influences – from both children and siblings. Her participation has included language learning and computing skills, both connected by the desire to communicate efficiently with physically distant family members. For her, too, learning has helped her to cope with her depression and provided that spark to engage more actively with others.

Progression and pathways

In formal education there has been a marked interest in student recruitment, progression and outcomes related to FE and HE (though most of this discourse has been concentrated on school leavers). In this study, the pathways to formal education have been varied and the older learners' future commitment to formal education clear. Their wider perceptions of life in later adulthood affect their "progression" to subsequent learning which may be to formal contexts but equally to non-formal or informal. For each of the three participants there is clarity of purpose in terms of "what next"? Clare, through her Access programme is heading to university and ultimately a better job; John is involved in professional development but is limiting his future involvement unless it assists him to work more effectively with youth; Janet is likely to undertake more advanced computing, linked to family considerations. Hence, their motivation is strong in later life and suggestive of an active learning stance. These cases challenge stereotypical notions of older people disengaging with life/career; despite their location in the lifecourse, their pathways are at least clear to them. Laslett's (1989) third age is full of complexity and intrigue – at least the distinction between the second and third ages are more permeable than first thought.

Conclusion

This paper has investigated the realities faced by older adults when (re) engaging with further education or university studies in the West of Scotland. Students in the overall sample were selected from a variety of institutional types and in our initial analysis we have focussed on three students, illustrative of the kinds of emergent issues faced in considering study, the actual teaching-learning context and how formal education connects with their lives and future plans.

We have selected the sub-themes of early learning experiences (particularly those of schooling), learning orientations (motivation for study) and their pathways for further learning related to wider life patterns. The three respondents' biographies attest to the complexities of understanding how older people make decisions to return to formal education (at times after significant absence), the multiple sites of motivation and the character of future life/study directions.

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SHARING THE AGES – SHARING THE CULTURE: TOWARDS A CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS- GENERATIONAL WAY OF LEARNING AND LIVING

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Abstract

*Does the usual demographical approach fit to the educational and cultural fields ?
Demography makes « strata » - or « cohort » - in the population data : 0-10, 10-20, ...and so on.
Thirty years ago, in most of the studies, didn't exist any « strata » above 60 or 65: these people
were « old ». Indistinctly « old ».*

*According the new range of the ages, we have to revise some of our points of view.
What is suitable to link up the several generations by positive means, to make a society where we
all like to live in and to feel alive, a crosscultural and crossgenerational one ?
How can we manage to build on and to implement a cultural project: to make a movie, to play
theatre, to tell life stories, to learn a language, to share one or another experience? Generations
together.*

The workshop consists of two complementary approaches :

*A socio-demographical one, inviting to a concrete analysis of some presentations of the age-
classes (+ their actual or virtual impact on the public policies)*

*A socio-cultural one , describing some experiences in the French-speaking Community of
Belgium, experiences crossing generations and their multicultural inputs.*

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she worked in France, Congo and Belgium. She was a civil servant in the Ministry of the French
Community (Belgium) responsible for gender and intergenerational mainstreaming and
experimental projects . As consultant or animator, she now promotes collaboration between
artists and people from all origins.*

For decades, for centuries, all people “sixty old or more” were defined only as “OLD” , “old and grey”. They disappeared far from the common landscape, suddenly or progressively but surely. In 2007, one must say that the borderline steps back : more and more people live 20 or 30 years after their sixtieth anniversary but they don't seem old or they don't feel so or they don't like to be told (called) old.

The UNAFP report of 1998 noticed that the size of the “very old” class (80 old and more) was bigger and bigger: from 1.1 % in 1950 the weight of this class would go beyond 8 % in 2050. But discussing with these very old people, one learns from most of them that “the actual very old” are ... older than themselves.

We also know that children sometimes say: “When I was young ...” and it is not ridiculous. AGE is a CONCEPT and it is a “related reality”: from the day of our birth till the day of our death, we grow older; but the way is unequal, we don't race at the same speed all along. This is true for each of us and for all of us.

Nevertheless, from the local level till the international one, a lot of political decisions are linked to the treatment of demographical data.

Demography presents the composition and the dispersal of any population by means of “strata” or “figures” that summarise a lot of data and seem to be evident.

The concept of GENERATION gives us a key to unsettle some scientific patterns that look like too obvious. Biologically, the generations follow one another, each twenty or thirty years, according the cycle of the reproduction of the mankind. But adopting a historical point of view we pay attention to the human characteristics of the life: a diachronical and a synchronical reading of the cohorts opens plural interpretations.

For instance, one can present all the generations who live today like “tiles” laying one on another. People from different age who live together at one point of time experienced different important events around their twentieth anniversary (more or less between the 16th and the 25th). One can wonder how they manage to share a common territory (a neighbourhood – a village or a town). On another part, enlarging the ordinary denomination of “third age”, it is possible to show the repartition of the population in 3 to 12 “generations” (images ...) : each polygon can be read like a map. One is able to put questions on the policy in several fields of the economy, the social security, the cultural offers, the urban/rural balance, the roads, the school, ... with a main interest in the existing or missing relations and links between the identified generations

✓ *Socio-cultural approach :*
Describing experiences crossing generations and their multicultural inputs (the most in Frenchspeaking Community of Belgium or in France)

According the new ranges of the ages present today, and if working with a socio-cultural approach, we have to revise some of our points of view.

What is suitable to link up the several generations by positive means, to make a society where we all like to live in and to feel alive, a crosscultural and crossgenerational one ?
How can we manage to build on and to implement a cultural project : (movie, theatre, life stories, ...) In an intergeneration philosophy.?.

Before presenting the “table” of some projects, two remarks :
GENDER : QUESTION(S)

Does one attend a distribution, a new repartition of roles and functions between women and men ? Crossing culture(s) and age(s) is a cultural and social purpose but it is a political too. Knowledge, skills, boldness, unpretentiousness, imagination, faith and confidence are absolutely necessary.

More than elsewhere, women are present in this kind of projects.

They seem not to fear the many and big obstacles.

Some are pioneers.

Unexpected on the market of the employment, some are tempted by trying to perform something difficult but whereby they can TRY WITH AND AMONG other people (some of these partners are economically or socially excluded).

Men who initiate similar projects or make a partnership in this new field have an « atypical » career : either they are in « the social reckoned structure » and they like to be at the origin of something special, either they make use of a break to live according their ethical aims

PROJECTS – INDICATORS

The hereafter resumed examples are :

- Either : carried by associations that are aimed towards crossgenerational projects
- Either : temporary or long term initiatives answering to a public offer (local, regional, national, international), leaning – for some of them - on a sectorial experimental politics (public and private fund).

The table is built on some main questions : WHAT – WHO – WHERE – WHEN – HOW that open to some « indicators » that are necessary to understand and to evaluate the process and the success.

Indicators

Preliminary : same questions fit to each main item.

One has some questions to put about :

- *ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT* : favourable circumstances (and : what is the « detonator » ?)
- « *ACTORS* » *OF THE PROJECT* : person.s, public and private institutions
- *OBJECT(IVE) - AIM* : how becomes it common ? which steps ? (short – middle – long term), which process ? how to choose the measures in order to evaluate ?
- *PEDAGOGICAL METHOD (S)* : inventory of the resources (persons, places, money, etc); estimate and foresee the « welves » and the follow up of the project, here and now (« one shot » action) or aiming expansion, development, dispersal, reproduction, advocacy, ...

N.B. : Even without answer (temporarily) all questions are relevant.

Moreover when imagining, organizing and developing or disseminating a social and cultural politics, one needs to analyze “realized” actions to lean on and to propose a budget at the fitting level (local, “communitarian” or “departmental”, regional, national, international).By this way, we put attention to the most important part of the “alliances” (to make network).

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR FOURTH AGERS

FIRST TASTE'S ARTS EDUCATIONAL WORK IN RESIDENTIAL AND DAY-CARE SETTINGS

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Abstract

First Taste is a Derbyshire Dales charity whose objective is to celebrate and enhance the quality of life for older people in nursing, residential and day care settings by encouraging participation and involvement in arts activities. To achieve this aim it uses qualified tutors to conduct interactive sessions exploring painting, arts, crafts and ceramics, music and singing, exercise and dance, poetry and prose. Initiated and run by a group of dedicated volunteers, First Taste is dependent on funding from statutory and voluntary sources

This session considers evaluations of three complementary First Taste programmes:

- *Melody, Memory & Movement (MMM): 20 fortnightly sessions per year took place in 15 homes between September 2003 and June 2006.*
- *Pottery, Paint, Petals and Personnel (PPPP) : a project run in four care homes between March 2005 and February 2006.*
- *A Fresh Look at the Arts (FLA), a multi-disciplinary arts education programme of 20 sessions run in Age Concern's Bakewell Day Centre for Older People between July 2005 and March 2006.*

The research was carried out mainly through one-to-one interviews with learners, tutors, home and day care managers and care staff, learners' relatives, First Taste trustees. A sample of individual sessions from each programme was observed. Parts of some sessions were video-recorded. Written questionnaires were completed by care staff participating in PPPP and learners who took part in FLA. Examples of similar work being carried out elsewhere in the UK were investigated.

Investigations highlighted the uniqueness of First Taste's approach. Research so far indicates that nowhere in the UK are similar packages of consistent, regular learning opportunities offered to older people in care. Common conclusions to emerge from the three evaluations were that making music and taking part in creative arts activities is beneficial to home residents, day centre users and carers. Learning together helps develop a sense of community, contributing to a shared awareness of achievement and well-being. Maintaining high standards of content and delivery, developing appropriate, meaningful assessment procedures and increasing the commitment of home managements are important issues. Securing funding to subsidise the costs of programmes is a continuing challenge.

This session will be of particular interest to:

- *everyone involved in teaching very elderly, frail learners*
- *carers of older people*
- *policy-makers at local and national levels responsible for the care and well-being of very elderly, frail people.*

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(NAME). Other clients include the Firebird Trust and Making Music. She previously managed the English String Orchestra and was the Scottish Arts Council's Music Officer.

Introduction

Whatever our age, entering a new stage of life is like embarking on a journey into the unknown. For very elderly people, the fourth agers, that journey is daunting and frightening. Often they have to learn to live with increasing physical and mental frailties in unfamiliar surroundings. Their continuing learning needs are encapsulated in the four pillars of education identified by Delors (1996): learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be.¹ NIACE (National Institute for Adult Continuing Education) states, "Learning can help to change people's mindsets, leading to stronger relationships between carers and those being cared for."² Too often, however, activities offered in care settings are designed simply to pass the time. Their purpose is entertainment and they contain no learning element. This paper outlines the work of First Taste, an organisation committed to offering alternative stimulating lifelong learning opportunities, and considers evaluations of three complementary First Taste programmes.

First Taste runs arts educational activities for frail, elderly people in Derbyshire Dales. This small, local charity was started in 1997 by six people committed to improving opportunities for learning in residential and day care settings. All had personal experiences of elderly relatives in care. Their vision was to bring into homes qualified arts tutors to conduct interactive creative sessions. In conjunction with the then local Community Education Council they ran a successful pilot scheme in two homes. Encouraged by positive responses from residents, relatives and home staff, the volunteers, with advice and help from the local Rural Community Council, then organised themselves into a formally constituted body with charitable status. First Taste was born and, with grant aid from a number of statutory and voluntary sources, has developed over the past 10 years an extensive arts educational programme covering painting, craftwork, ceramics, music and movement, singing, poetry and reminiscence.

A board of eight trustees, with seven advisory committee members, now manages First Taste. It employs no staff and the Organising Secretary, herself a trustee, carries out the day-to-day administration. All 24 residential homes in Derbyshire Dales, whether operated privately, by the local authority or by charitable trusts, may benefit from First Taste's activities. The number of homes taking part in each programme of sessions depends on the availability of funding. Homes contribute £20 towards the cost of each session.

The charity's various programmes provide each year around 500 professionally delivered sessions. Experienced, specialist tutors, each carefully chosen for their empathy with older people, deliver sessions. Projects are meticulously designed and planned so that each learner is helped to make a positive contribution. Participants are encouraged to talk about their lives, hopes, aspirations and the things around them.

First Taste has received grant aid from the National Lottery, East Midlands Development Agency, Derbyshire County Council Social Services, Derbyshire Dales District Council, Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire Primary Care Trust, Darley Dale Town Council and charitable trusts, including the Nationwide Foundation, Lloyds TSB Foundation, the Lankelly Foundation and the Esmee Fairbairn Trust. It has received donations from local organisations and individuals.

The former Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Baroness Estelle Morris of Yardley, who recently became First Taste's patron, underlined the importance of First Taste's work. "I do

think that we underestimate the power of the arts and the influence it can have on all of us, no matter our age, background or time of life," she wrote. "First Taste is an outstanding example of an organisation, which uses the arts and creativity to improve the quality of life for people in residential and care homes in the Derbyshire Dales"³.

The Evaluations

Melody, Memory and Movement (MMM)

I was commissioned to research, assess, appraise and evaluate the effectiveness of this three-year programme. Funded by the National Lottery's Community Fund, the programme ran from September 2003 to June 2006 and comprised a session every two weeks (20 sessions per year) in each of 15 homes. Directed by a tutor and assistant tutor, each hour-long session was programmed round a theme. Memory and reminiscence underpinned the whole programme. Chair-based movement/dance sequences were repeated and developed from session to session. Feedback from residents and care staff was welcomed. Suggestions for future programme content were welcomed and implemented.

Over the three years MMM programmes broadened to incorporate more imaginative movement exercises, action songs and rhythmic development through exploring different sounds produced by percussion instruments. Singing together was a valuable and major component of every session. As well as singing songs they know, residents were encouraged to learn new simple melodies, words and rhythms. Percussion instruments used included tambourines, drums, tambours, maracas and shakers. Chime bars, requiring greater physical dexterity and more concentration, were successfully introduced in year three.

Pottery, Paint, Petals & Personnel (PPPP)

This programme took place in four care homes from 1 March 2005 to 28 February 2006. Funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, it had two aims: to provide creative stimulative educational opportunities for frail older people and to enhance the skills levels of care home staff. I was commissioned to monitor the personnel element and to produce a report and model recommending how training for carers could become an integral part of First Taste's work.

Four care homes took part in PPPP. Their contractual agreements with First Taste emphasised the "personnel" element and stated that a minimum of two carers should attend each creative arts session, involving residents and staff working together. Taking part in these sessions would offer care staff opportunities to enhance their core skills.

The sessions, generally occurring at fortnightly intervals with extended breaks over the Easter, summer and Christmas holiday periods, were led by two experienced tutors, who delivered a programme of multidisciplinary craft activities, covering pottery, textiles, floral art, painting and collage. The tutors sought to create stimulating environments for all learners (residents and all home staff, including managers, care assistants, activity organisers), whatever their physical or mental state might be.

Fresh Look at the Arts (FLA)

Funded by Derbyshire County Council Social Services, FLA offered an interactive, stimulating, multi-disciplinary, high quality arts education programme of 20 sessions to members and staff of Age Concern's Bakewell Day Centre for Older People. This day centre is run and managed by Age Concern Derby and Derbyshire with funding from Derbyshire County Council Social Services. The programme of 20 sessions at fortnightly intervals took place from July 2005 until March 2006. I was commissioned to assess the impact of the programme, its educational content, its appeal and its benefits.

A lead tutor was responsible for the overall planning and introduction of all sessions. Specialist tutors, who led sessions focussing on music, arts and crafts and reminiscence, assisted him. Sessions offered opportunities to explore the potentials of simple new technologies such as digital photography, digital audio recording and video recording. Sessions were linked and the last few were devoted to putting together a timeline built up from songs and members' lifetime memories.

Methodologies

Research methodologies were tailor-made to fit the specific criteria of each evaluation. To monitor and appraise the programmes' educational content and benefits, levels of participation by learners and the extent of care staff involvement, I observed individual sessions: one MMM each year in every home; one PPPP in each home; four FLA. After each session, I initiated with individual learners brief conversations aimed at assessing their reactions. Managers or senior members of staff were interviewed. Tutors' views were obtained through discussions and their written reports. Care staff taking part in PPPP and all Age Concern learners (staff and members) involved in FLA completed written questionnaires. The provision in other parts of the UK of arts educational activities for older people in care settings was investigated.

The Research

That MMM sessions made an impact is confirmed by comments from residents. "You'll never grow old when you're singing," said one. "We're learning. We hope First Taste will continue. It's important to us," said another. "It's good to sing together," said a third. A resident who had been involved in music all her life since studying at the Royal Manchester College of Music, told me, "I'm always happy to extend my understanding of music."

In the course of my observations I saw examples of how powerfully music can induce responses from people with severe dementia and memory loss. Songs and music triggered memories. I often watched residents, who normally never spoke, joining in as they remembered word-perfectly songs learned many years ago. Sometimes music caused a resident suddenly to become alert and responsive. This happened with a lady, who came to life when the tutors sang "Sur le pont d'Avignon". She excitedly told them she had been born in Avignon and as a child used to dance on the bridge. At all previous sessions she was totally silent and expressionless. I recorded after one session, "Everyone I spoke with afterwards responded positively. They couldn't say much but the joyful expressions on their faces said it all."

My observations and tutors' reports confirmed the value of a fully engaged staff presence. The more one-to-one contact between individuals and carers, the more signs of active participation there were from even the most withdrawn of residents. Care staff members were positive about the benefits of MMM sessions to residents. Many said they would like to participate more fully but were constrained by lack of time. Some managers spoke of their desire to help staff develop more holistic approaches to their caring responsibilities so that music, movement and sharing activities with residents became equal priorities to responding to their physical needs. Their general view, however, was that care staff had no musical skills and lacked confidence. First Taste encouraged managers and staff to view their active participation in MMM sessions as valuable training opportunities. Nonetheless, even in the third year tutors continued to report that in many sessions no staff took part. When asked to comment, most managers referred to shortages and overwork.

MMM highlighted to First Taste that development of care staff skills had to be an important part of any programme designed to improve the quality of life for residents. PPPP was a first attempt to integrate into sessions provision for staff training. At the time of signing up to the programme, all four home managers and their staff expressed support in principle.

Staff said participating in PPPP sessions helped build their confidence. Some carers said that at first they felt uncertain about taking part because they had no artistic skills. They found,

however, that tutors designed tasks, which could be completed by people of all abilities. Sessions offered opportunities to pick up ideas for simple activities carers could themselves initiate. Care staff learned more about residents and their needs. One carer reported, "I found out that the residents can work very well together and communicate effectively." Tutors said they felt supported in all homes. Even when busy with other duties, carers showed an interest, encouraged residents and responded positively to tutors' encouragement to become involved.

Managers' reactions to PPPP were positive. "Staff are learning from sessions," said one. Another reported, "Our activities organiser has picked up ideas and is interested in developing work initiated by the tutors." It became apparent, however, that while all managers invited their staff to take part in PPPP, none selected nor positively encouraged individual care staff to attend sessions on a regular basis. No home had in place a staff development-training programme, to which PPPP could contribute. Staff members were not briefed about opportunities offered by PPPP to develop their core skills. Managers' main concerns related to staff shortages and overwork. Promoting staff development seemed a secondary consideration to looking after residents' physical needs.

FLA was a multi-disciplinary programme, whose content and delivery reflected lessons learned from MMM and PPPP programmes. All involved with Bakewell's Age Concern Day Care Centre were target learners: members, employees and volunteers. Each FLA session offered a different artistic experience but feedback indicated group development was the aspect most appreciated by members and staff alike.

With help and encouragement, all members could be persuaded to join in some kind of activity at some time. The mixture of music and creative arts offered variety. Reminiscence sessions offered opportunities to share old memories that were still vivid and, for some people, easier to recall than events of recent days. Sharing such memories brought confidence and increased self-awareness. Some members said they enjoyed music and singing old songs. Creating artefacts brought together people, who possibly had little in common apart from the fact they were elderly and frail. Members got to know each other through learning about each other's lives. They began to feel part of a group, rather than individuals who happened to be together because they attended the same day centre. Participation helped to overcome isolation. When asked, "What do you think you have learned?" one member responded, "How to mix with people."

Age Concern staff who took part in FLA described how they learned about members' backgrounds and gained a fuller understanding of each individual. Having picked up skills and ideas for initiating arts-related activities, they were better equipped to offer members an enhanced programme and improved service. They learned how a structured programme could contribute to a shared awareness of achievement and well-being.

Tutors reported that members responded positively to both familiar and unfamiliar music and songs. Because some individual songs encouraged spontaneous reminiscence, sessions occasionally went in different directions to how they were planned. Music was a powerful medium, which sometimes provoked sad memories. When that happened, tutors depended on Age Concern professionals, who had skills to deal with the consequences.

Tutors and Age Concern staff agreed FLA would have benefited from regular opportunities for staff and tutors to review progress together. They hoped that staff and tutors would collaborate when future timetables and programmes were drawn up. Each schedule should include both an introductory meeting for tutors and staff to agree on how to work together as a team, and post-session briefings for staff on possible follow-up activities.

Assessment

First Taste is committed to building in effective assessment to all its programmes and work on developing appropriate procedures is on-going. A system of assessment, albeit rudimentary, has been in place since the beginning, with a team of trustee assessors regularly observing and reporting on activities. A lifelong learning consultant was commissioned to investigate the possible embedding of First Taste's work in Derbyshire's mainstream adult education programme. Having concluded that individual learning outcomes and criteria for assessment set out by the Open College Network for its non-vocational units could be adapted, she explored with tutors and trustees how such procedures might be adopted and adjusted to fit the needs of all learners in care settings. They expressed concern that without sensitive modifications, local authority adult education assessment structures and criteria were cumbersome and inappropriate. Discussions are underway to establish a meaningful yet informal assessment process.

Sustainability

Financing First Taste's work is a key issue. The charity receives no regular support from any official body and depends on ad hoc grant-aid from a range of statutory and voluntary sources. It is devising a new multi-arts programme, aimed at developing the MMM, PPPP and FLA models and incorporating the recommendations emerging from my evaluations. The programme's implementation, however, depends on subsidy. Neither homes nor day centres can themselves afford to pay the full costs of tutors' fees, materials and equipment plus administrative overheads. The outcome of applications to various funding bodies is still uncertain. Possible collaborations with Derbyshire County Council and Chesterfield College are being explored.

Conclusions

My research suggests that the consistency and long-term regularity of First Tastes programmes make it unique. I have found no similar package elsewhere in the UK. More and more artists see work in care settings as an important part of their wider commitment to the community. The quality of what they offer is high and imaginative but going in for a single visit or for a project covering a set number of weeks is very different from offering fortnightly sessions. However, First Taste's continuation as an exceptional provider of lifelong learning opportunities for fourth agers depends on guaranteed lasting funding.

Making music and taking part in creative arts activities is beneficial to home residents, day centre users, care staff and volunteers. Learning together helps develop a sense of belonging, contributing to a shared awareness of achievement and well-being. Joint creative experiences bring together confused and lonely individuals to become a community.

The quality and effectiveness of learning depends on tutors' skills, high standards of relevant and appropriate content and the development of distinctive delivery styles. Learners respond to new challenges. There is a need to evolve effective assessment systems which are fit for purpose and uncomplicated.

Involving management and staff in planning, implementing and reviewing programmes will underline their responsibilities. Building in staff-only preparatory and in-service training sessions will, in addition to increasing confidence and skills, enhance carers' understanding of what programmes are setting out to achieve. The desired outcome is an increased active commitment by home managements and their care staff to a vision of holistic care. That vision will be fulfilled when all homes provide stimulating creative activities every day, with tutors making regular visits to build on existing provision and inject new ideas.

First Taste's programmes improve the physical and mental wellbeing of those in care settings. They nurture self-confidence, self-esteem, and independence and, through encouraging participants to work with others, reduce isolation. As a learner who took part in MMM said, "What we enjoy about the music sessions is listening, getting us out of our rooms, doing things together. Music brings happiness."

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Helen Fraser

SHARING INNOVATIVE MODELS OF ARTS EDUCATION AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN OLDER AGE IN EUROPE

The work of age-culture.net, the European Network for Age and Culture

Almuth Fricke, Co-ordinator of age-culture.net

Demographic shift concerns all Europe. The Europeans are getting older and fewer. Ageing and culture has become a transversal issue of special European relevance. The cultural memory of the present generation of older Europeans is an important resource in the process of European integration and cohesion and a potential for the understanding between cultures and generations.

Since 2005 the European Network for Age and Culture age-culture.net links cultural operators, producers, and creators of culture who are active in the field of arts education and culture in older age. The network aims to create awareness of the cultural and economic opportunities of the ageing process in Europe. Orientation towards the interests and needs of older people allows the development of cultural projects, products and services which can improve the quality of later life. Cultural participation and arts activities encourage (older) people to learn new skills, keep them active and improve their self-esteem. Cultural institutions and associations are challenged to address older people not only as customers but also as active partners and cultural actors.

age-culture.net aims to recognise, support and enrich the cultural lives and learning of older people in Europe through advocacy, information, education, training and strategic partnerships.

The network partners learn from Europe-wide best practices, build a European platform for creativity in old age, develop models of intergenerational and intercultural cooperation, try out new modules of vocational training, and research and evaluate innovative approaches of cultural work and arts education in later life.

The presentation focuses on the relevance of European cooperation in this field of work, on ongoing partner-projects and new developments in the network.

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Introduction

The European Network for Age and Culture “age-culture.net” links cultural operators, producers, and creators of culture who are active in the field of arts education and culture in older age from all over Europe. Partners from Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Hungary, The Netherlands, Spain and the U.K. share and exchange best practice in this field of work, develop multilateral cooperation projects and promote a positive culture of ageing through advocacy, information, education, training and strategic partnerships.

The network has been established in November 2005 by an initiative of the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia and is co-ordinated by the Institute for Arts Education and Culture in Remscheid.

As Special Group of Interest “Ageing and Culture” the network is part of SEN@ER - Silver Economy Network of European Regions¹³, a joint initiative of – today - 16 European regions. The overriding goal of the SEN@ER network is to improve the quality of life for older citizens, stimulate economic activity for growth and job creation, and support cohesion and inclusion

¹³ For more information see www.silvereconomy-europe.org .

across European Union regions. This European initiative regards the ageing of our society not as a threat but rather as a challenge and an opportunity for regional economic growth and for improving Europe's competitiveness. In February 2005 the network has been officially founded by 10 European regions. Since then the network has grown continually. Up to now 16 regions have agreed on the "Bonn Declaration for the Silver Economy as an Opportunity for Quality of Life, Economic Growth and Competitiveness in Europe". SEN@ER is also an initiative of the region of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany). The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) of SEN@ER deal thematically with the relevant topics of the Silver Economy. Examples for such topics are ageing well, independent living, culture, financial services and tourism.

According to the goals of SEN@ER, age-culture.net aims to create awareness of the cultural and economic opportunities of the ageing process in Europe. Orientation towards the interests and needs of older people allows the development of cultural projects, products and services which can improve the quality of later life. Cultural participation and arts activities encourage (older) people to learn new skills and help them to adapt to the needs and challenges of daily life in the knowledge society. On the other hand, cultural institutions and associations are challenged to address older people not only as customers but also as active partners and cultural actors.

Demographic shift and the impact of "Silver Economy"

At European level, initiatives like SEN@ER are a response to the ongoing debate about demographic shift that concerns – in different nuances - all Europe. In general, Europeans are getting older, fewer and more diverse. In the Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations", issued in March 2005, the European Commission states: In 2003, the natural population increase in Europe was just 0.04% per annum; the new Member States, with the exception of Cyprus and Malta, all saw falling populations. In many countries, immigration has become vital to ensure population growth. The fertility rate is almost everywhere below the threshold needed to renew the population.¹⁴

In the last few years the topic has arrived at the European policy agenda. In communications of the EC15, resolutions of the European Council¹⁶ and of the European Parliament ¹⁷ the European institutions have come to the conclusion that the historic shift and increased ageing of the European population should not only be seen in negative terms as a challenge but also offer opportunities to improve the competitiveness and innovative abilities of the European economies and to promote growth and employment according to the aims of the Lisbon strategy. "Responding to the needs of older people by making accessible specific goods and services to improve their quality of life represents new economic opportunities ("silver economy") which should be seized upon."¹⁸

At a first glance this has little to do with culture and education. However, the changing perception of ageing and the fact that the topic arrives to the European agenda may help to promote the topic also in the agenda settings of cultural and educational policies, to challenge negative attitudes towards ageing and older people and to promote greater participation by older people in society.

Older people are not a problem of care but should be seen as active participants in society who have resources and potentials which benefit society as a whole. Society needs their knowledge, know-how and their contribution. Older people make useful contributions to society, to the strengthening of cohesion between the generations and to the development of civil society, which

¹⁴ Communication from the Commission: Green Paper "Confronting demographic change: a new solidarity between the generations", COM (2005) 94 final.

¹⁵ "The Demographic Future of Europe – From Challenge to Opportunity" (14114/06), October 2006. In October 2006 the "First Forum on Europe's Demographic Future" took place in Brussels.

¹⁶ "Opportunities and Challenges of Demographic Change in Europe" (5799/07), resolution adopted by the Council on 22-07-2007.

¹⁷ For example in the European Parliament resolution on the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing (Madrid, 8-12 April 2002), (C 127/675).

¹⁸ "Opportunities and Challenges of Demographic Change in Europe" (5799/07), resolution adopted by the Council on 22-07-2007

may not be reflected in purely economic terms. This includes their social and cultural commitment. However, older men and women are a heterogeneous group with different abilities and needs depending on individual's age, specific social, cultural and economic circumstances and health status. This diversity must be taken into account when mobilising the potential of older people or addressing their needs in a spirit of social cohesion and solidarity between the generations. Compared on an international level it becomes very evident that the life expectancy in different nations and social groups reflects also their prosperity and access to resources. In Germany, for instance, it corresponds to the level of education and income: the life expectancy of migrants is considerably below the one of the native population, well-educated people live longer than socially disadvantaged.

Historically it is a quite new development that the life-phase of old age is reached by a majority of the population and the opportunity to deal actively with the demographic shift and with ageing in Europe should be understood as a privilege. From a social, educational and cultural perspective, the increasing life expectancy holds the chance of individual and social development.

The relevance of education and culture (in later life) for the building of a United Europe
We believe, that culture is “not only embellishment or decoration for society, but is a driving force, or possibly even the strongest driving force, behind development in society”. This statement of the former director of Graz European Cultural Capital expresses that cultural participation is in no way a luxury but it delivers stimuli vital for the development of an individual's personality at all stages of life and for the integration of the individual into society.

At European level it was not until 1991 that the EU officially began to deal with culture. Its legal base is still very small: in the Maastricht treaty the Article 151 says that the Union "shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore." Culture has always been considered by the EU as an area where the main competence remains at the national and regional level. This position has been – and is - influencing the (very small) amount of EU-funding for cultural projects.

However, recently there seems to be a “cultural turn” in the European cultural policies. There is a growing recognition that the EU must bring itself closer to the citizen and that art and culture can make an important contribution. Indeed, art and culture offer an inspiring way of looking at reality. They can provide a more human dimension to the integration project, a so-called “Soul for Europe”. In this context, the perception and role of culture in the EU is gradually changing. Whereas, in the past, the question was what Europe could do for culture, there is a growing recognition that culture lies at the heart of the European project and has a unique and indispensable role to play. It is therefore increasingly necessary to also ask what culture can do for Europe. At the Berlin Conference “A Soul for Europe” José Manuel Barroso, the president of the European Commission, said: “Europe needs culture since culture, without any doubt, contributes to its well-being, its greater welfare and its social cohesion. But, beyond that, Europe needs culture in order to proclaim, at this time of instability, that our values are not negotiable.”¹⁹ The fact that a President of the EC speaks about culture is really a novelty.

This changing European perception of the role of culture corresponds to a quiet recent finding: Culture carries real economic weight. It contributes to wealth creation. It creates new jobs. It contributes to innovation, the spirit of enterprise and knowledge. A recent report²⁰ commissioned by the EU shows that 2.6 % of its GDP comes from cultural activities. In 2004, at least 5.8 million people worked in the sector, equivalent to 3.1% of the total employed population in Europe – an enormous amount, in real terms

¹⁹ Speech at the Berlin Conference „A Soul for Europe”, 17-19 November 2006. Two weeks later (4 December 2006) the European Commission organised a hearing with the title “Culture – A sound investment in Europe. Preparing the upcoming EU-“Communication” on culture and Europe.

²⁰ The economy of culture in Europe. Study prepared for the European Commission by KEA European Affairs, Media Group (Turku School of Economics) and MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH. October 2006. http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/economy_en.html .

Ageing and culture – a transversal issue

The European Union is apparently becoming aware that the economic union is not sufficient to make the European project be a successful one. Europe needs culture because it is a key for identity, integration, diversity and creativity of its citizens. And the older generation is needed to take actively part in these processes. In Brussels, it is still not a matter of course to link these two topics – ageing and culture – but several papers and studies commissioned by the EC already consider it as a transversal theme.²¹

The present and future ‘silver’ generations are and will continue to be familiar with a united Europe. The personal histories of the present generation of senior citizens contain a cultural memory-bank of Europe’s more recent history. A civic society needs the experience that older people have. We should make use of their empirical knowledge for the developmental processes necessary for society through their active involvement. During their lifetime they have experienced, for example, the Second World War, the reconstruction and post-war stabilisation of Europe to its status as a globally important partner and the transformation from an industrial society to a service and scientific society. Because of their life experience they are able to value what EU also stands for: a long period of peace, economic and political stability and wealth.

Older people are increasingly interested in travelling – this includes travelling abroad, staying abroad for longer periods, and having contact with other nationalities and cultures. They are choosing to spend an increasing amount of its leisure time (and money) learning about and getting familiar with new cultures. Many Western Europeans decide to spend retirement in a Mediterranean country. Today there are far more German pensioners living in Spain than Spanish migrants in Germany.

On the other hand, in the coming years, growing numbers of migrants will retire from work and will actively device a life for themselves ‘between cultures’. They contribute to the building of more bridges between the European countries. ‘Bridges’ of this type may also be specific cultural projects that improve exchanges and understanding.

In our opinion, ageing and culture has become a transversal issue of special European relevance. The cultural memory of the present generation of older Europeans is an important resource in the process of European integration and cohesion and a potential for the understanding between cultures and generations.

The impact of lifelong learning and arts education in older age

As transversal topics of LLL-policies ageing and culture also play an important role in the settings of non-formal and informal learning. A study²² commissioned by EC to produce an inventory of best practices linking culture with education recommends that “senior citizens and intergenerational education should be regarded as a specific target group and a transversal theme.” Moreover, in the 2007 LLP General Call for proposals (EAC/61/2006) priority is given in parts of the program to projects “exploring the interaction between education and culture”.

The demographic change will have a major impact on society and on the economy - and consequently on education and training provision and needs. The Communication from the Commission “Adult learning: It is never too late to learn”²³ emphasizes that investment is needed for the ageing population because the changing demographic situation calls for “active ageing” policies addressing life both before and after retiring from formal work. Besides ensuring a longer working life, an expansion of learning provision for retired people is needed. As people

²¹ See, for instance, the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee: „The social dimension of culture”, 30-04-2004 (2004/C 112/17). In November 2006, UNESCO, AGE and CICEB, the network of Cultural Institutes operating in Brussels, organized a conference on active ageing and culture: “Towards a Multiage Society: The Cultural Dimension of Age Policies”.

²² Inventory of best practices linking culture with education in the Member States, candidate countries and the EEA countries. Pôle Universitaire Européen, Nancy. (Contract no 2004 – 1528/001-001 CLT-CA31). http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/educult_en.html .

²³ (COM(2006)614 final).

are reaching retirement in better physical and mental health, and post-retirement life expectancy is extending, learning should be an integral part of this new phase in their lives and will have a vital role in keeping retired people in touch with their social environment. This group of citizens also have enormous potential in terms of what they can contribute to the learning of others.

Biographical integration, competences to cope with the challenges of every day's life, the maintenance and enhancement of productive competences and the development of creative competences are today the elements of the German understanding of modern education in old age. However, it is only partly implemented.

Participation in arts and culture is always related to education. Arts education not only includes the acquirement of artistic competences, but all forms of formal and non-formal learning. Arts education contributes to a better comprehension of the steadily increasing "symbolic material" in society and enables the individual to "read" and to "handle" this material. This includes also sensitising for the sensual and aesthetic qualities of these forms of expression. Arts education seeks to improve social and communicative competences that are required for an active participation in and shaping of the social environment and public discourse.

We are convinced that especially arts education is – apart from artistic production and creative processes – a good and attractive gateway to learning, offering manifold possibilities of aesthetical experience and specific methods:

Cultural participation and arts activities keep older people learning new skills in a very stimulating and playful way, contribute to personal fulfilment, interpersonal and intercultural competences and improve their self-esteem. Cultural skills are necessary to develop and maintain key competences, such as the capacity for integration, participation, self-awareness, orientation, expression, communication and critical faculties. Therefore arts education creates the conditions for the successful acquirement of the constantly growing cultural potential of humanity. Encouraging older people back into learning, using the arts and creative activities, can be a gateway to social inclusion and the development of a positive culture of ageing.

age-culture.net: Sharing innovative models of arts education and cultural participation in older age in Europe

In the past one and a half years of networking we got to know manifold convincing examples of good practice in the participating regions:

Our Dutch partner initiated a Song Contest addressing older migrants in Holland and combined it with talent development for those who during their working life often hadn't had the opportunity to participate in cultural education. This stimulating project will hopefully have a German counterpart in 2008 and culminate in an International festival in the framework of Ruhr 2010 Cultural Capital of Europe. Pam Schweitzer and her European Reminiscence Network was responsible for the wonderful project "Making Memories Matter". The reminiscence arts project (2004-5) with seven partners from different European countries culminated in a touring exhibition of 3-dimensional "Life Portrait Boxes" made by older people and artists. This exhibition is still running and continues to stimulate inter-generational and intercultural reminiscence work. The Austrian partners realised a project with older people on keywork in museum and demonstrated that cultural activity and involvement of the older generation is not only a key to social participation but also a very intelligent form of audience development. Another very inspiring model for us is the Irish Bealtaine festival: Running every year in May, this groundbreaking festival is an agenda-setting cultural first, unique to Ireland. This celebration of creativity in older age is now in its 12th year. In May 2006 there were 1000 events countrywide and an audience of 40,000 people. It is one of Ireland's biggest arts festivals, and promotes all art forms including theatre, literature, dance, film, storytelling, music, painting, sculpture and photography made by and for older people. This year's motto "Forever begin" is a programmatic philosophy of lifelong participation in the arts: we can always be alive to new and

undiscovered experiences in life, no matter what age we are. The cooperation project VEO – Virtual Experiences of Older People – A Memory-Bank on European Identity was recently proposed to the Commission by six network partners in order to apply for funding in the new Lifelong Learning Programme. “Memory pieces – memory gaps: Arts in Geriatrics” is planned to be a learning partnership between Finland, Poland and Germany.

Apparently we can learn a lot from each other in Europe: in the field of new models of learning and arts education in later life, of audience development, participation of older migrants, and intergenerational work.

Strands and goals of age-culture.net

The network aims to recognise, support and enrich the cultural lives and learning of older people in Europe through advocacy, information, education, training and strategic partnerships.

At a more concrete level, the strands of age-culture.net are:

Awareness rising: Create visibility and change the perception of ageing by campaigns that show the potentials of active ageing by advocacy of the sector.

Defend cultural & age diversity, cultural participation and social inclusion. Lobbying and influencing EU-wording and policy in order to challenge negative attitudes towards ageing.

Exchange of experience: Share information and expertise.

Communication: Maintain the age-culture.net website; build an archive on the web-site with documents and information on partners and ongoing cooperation projects, presentations on the issues of the network in papers and on conferences by all partners.

EU lobbying: Define and support European-wide ageing & culture policy development.

Empowerment of partners: Develop expertise by (action based) research, enhance quality of work with older people, train professionals and volunteers, provide evaluations models, tools and guidelines, and evaluate concrete cooperation projects

Cooperation: Setting up international project consortia.

Successful proposals: Supporting the partner regions in writing proposals for EU funding programmes. Presentation and explanation of relevant EU funding programmes in the form of fact sheets and workshops, development of project ideas and proposal outlines.

Concretely the network aims to enlarge the network towards Eastern Europe making it more representative – new partners are welcome! We want and need to find support of policy makers, foundations and sponsors to secure a sustainable networking at long term. Concerning the ongoing cooperation projects we will realise a watching brief. The reporting back shall help to elaborate jointly guidelines and principles for evaluation: a manual / several toolkits will be prepared to be published in 2008.

Further information: www.age-culture.net

OLD DOGS AND NEW TRICKS: TEACHING COMPUTER SKILLS TO OLDER ADULTS

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Abstract

A review of the issues in teaching computer skills to adults, with particular emphasis on the needs of the older adult. Three main areas are considered: adult and lifelong learning, including personal issues and pressures facing the learner; the specific demands of teaching practical computer skills, including the classroom environment; and the particular problems faced by learners as they get older, such as physiological changes. The session draws on evidence from work in all of these areas, as well as research into the views and needs of the learners themselves. Rather than reach specific conclusions for such a diverse group of learners, the paper identifies some key factors which the adult learning tutor should consider when teaching practical computer skills, particularly when older adults are involved, for example the class composition and the presentation of handouts. There is no indication that older people cannot learn these skills, but the tutor must be aware of the specific characteristics and needs of the group.

George Geddes is Senior Librarian in the Systems Division at the University of Strathclyde. Since 2000, tutor in IT topics in the Centre for Lifelong Learning, teaching web design and computer safety. Particularly interested in issues related to teaching computer skills to older adults.

Thirty years ago, Arthur C Clarke wrote an article for *Vogue* entitled 'The world of 2001', which argued that lifelong learning is essential in a rapidly changing world:

"We have to abandon ... the idea that schooling is something restricted to youth. How can it be, in a world where half the things a man knows at twenty are no longer true at forty - and half the things he knows at forty hadn't been discovered when he was twenty?" (Clarke 1977)

A recent survey shows that 34% of those over 65 in the USA access the Internet.¹ In the UK, Internet usage is now ahead of DIY and gardening as the favourite hobby of retired people. 88% of retired people contact friends and family over the Web and 40% are regular shoppers.²

Yet it is "deeply embedded within popular culture that growing old is primarily associated with physical and mental decline." (Elliott 2000). Though Russell (2004) suggests that we should regard ageing "as a process and not a condition", a 'maleficent myth' (Shearring 1992) says there is "a mountain of evidence that the aging process leaves us with declining abilities [and] as the complexity of tasks increases the decline with aging increases" (Meyer and Talbot 1998). However, Baack, Brown and Brown (1991) argue that older adults are unfairly stereotyped as regards attitudes toward change and innovation, and age is only one factor. Marquie, Jordan-Boddaert and Huet (2002) also conclude that, though elderly learners may be less confident about computer work, this may not be only due to age.

Ostlund's view (2002) of elderly learners as "both a homogenous group defined by age *and* as a heterogeneous group defined by additional factors" also applies to mature students, who are "... heterogeneous, multi-dimensional in characteristics, and varied in terms of their needs and abilities." (Hiemstra 1993)

Adults are "not just big kids" (Thoms 2001). Unlike Shakespeare's schoolboy, "creeping like

snail, unwillingly to school", they study because they want to, gaining skills rather than qualifications. (Zemke 1984). Factors shown to affect persistence or withdrawal of Open University students may also be relevant to other mature learners:

“social and environmental: time and space available for study, patterns of work, ability to take part in tutorials or other institutional offerings, support of significant others, accommodation of social activities and friendship;

traumatic: e.g. illness, bereavement, unemployment or lack of support from partners;

intrinsic: ... students' attitudes, motivation and qualities such as persistence, hardiness or coping ability ... approaches to study and methods of study.” (Castles 2004)

The tutor requires “empathy... the human factor associated with learning”. (Thoms 2001) In addition, "understanding the relationship between learning environment components... [is] fundamental in helping ... to address student needs and promote understanding and learning" (Beurck, Malmstrom and Peppers 2003) as “each person... changes their thought patterns, their competencies and their behaviour to a smaller or greater extent. Such learning changes come from direct interaction between the individual learner on one hand and their environment, including the subject matter, on the other" (Rogers 2002).

For Atherton (2003), "the subject is not neutral: it imposes its own discipline". In particular, Bernstein (1997) suggests that "computing is more than a set of skills, it is a culture". It may be difficult to learn old words with new meanings ('icons', 'windows') and new words ('taskbar'). Bean (2003) suggests that older people cope more easily with the latter than the former. Ross and Schulz (1999) and Howard (2002) stress the inflexible nature of the subject, with the former concluding that learners "may be forced to adapt and harmonize with the computer (i.e. style flex) in order to attain desired learning goals." Unfortunately, when "... the learning experience is without precedent... individuals do not have personal images of themselves as successful learners..." (DeJoy 1991).

Howard (2002) writes of “a strong sense of learning a language, a way to communicate, when one first learns to use a computer.” Language learning differs in childhood and adulthood. Twyford (1987) suggests that this variance is partly to do with sociocultural and affective factors as "knowledge and skill are acquired by each of us according to a highly individual map". Scheppegegrell (1987) believes "the greatest obstacle to older adult language learning is the doubt - in the minds of both learner and teacher - that older adults can learn a new language”. Could the same be true of computer skills?

Is it surprising that reaction times in college students are better than those in middle aged men and older men? The more complex the operation, the slower the responses of the older groups (Inui 1997), though Wishart and Lee (1997) suggested that learning, rather than performance, of motor skills, was similar for younger and older adults. Rogers (2001) cites Belbin's 1960s work as evidence that well-designed learning makes age differences less important while acknowledging that "as we grow older, our short-term memory capacity becomes less efficient and more easily disturbed".

Physical conditions such as arthritis may hamper mouse usage (Bean 2003), with tasks needing three or more clicks causing problems (Artis 2004). Changes involving vision may affect comfortable use of a monitor. The clarity with which we see things reaches its maximum at 18, declines slowly to 45, sharply to 55 and then more slowly; as we get older we become more susceptible to glare, which in turn can lead to visual confusion. From a purely practical standpoint wearing bi-focal or varifocal glasses is a nuisance. Larger, sans-serif fonts are

preferred by older users (Bernard et al, 2001). Hearing peaks at around 14 then slowly declines. Older people learning a musical instrument find similar problems with eyesight, hearing and psycho-motor skills (Graessle 2000).

However, "older learners have already developed learning strategies that have served them well in other contexts" (Scheppegrell 1987) and are "more likely to adopt a deeper, comprehension-focused approach to learning, whereas younger students tended to adopt a more surface-level, assessment-focused approach." (Justice and Dornan 2001) Some writers suggest that adult learning differs because adults relate new knowledge to previous experience, but others indicate that children do likewise, with only the amount and nature of experience differing.

There is evidence that older students, whose schooling may have been more traditional, benefit as much from multimedia-based instruction as younger students (Van Gerven 2003). Belcheir's survey of college students (1998) found few age-related preferences as to methods and styles of instruction.

Fisher (1991) suggests that 'hands-on' group work in an informal environment is a key factor in coping with computer anxiety or technophobia, noting some differences between male and female adult students. Creating an informal environment may be difficult in a computer lab. Dupin-Bryant (2002) stresses the need for practical work, the use of humour and emphasis on basic concepts with minimal jargon.

Older and younger adults seem to cope with the physical aspects of computer tasks in a similar way; it is the mental aspects of the task which have a more pronounced effect on older learners. Often older learners reduce their work speed to compensate. The tutor should be prepared to allow the learner to follow their own route in the class, at their own speed, as much as possible.

In 2003 and 2004, the Research and Learning Innovation Unit of Adult Multicultural Education Services, on behalf of the Department of Education, Science and Training in Australia, carried out a major project which concluded that older learners engaged in ICT learning:

- “1. are more likely to undertake short non-award vocational courses - aim is to gain skills rather than qualifications
2. increasingly turn to community training providers for vocational and personal training
3. prefer learning in an informal learning environment, in small classes or groups
4. need slower paced, low intensity training and often prefer self-paced learning
5. take increasing responsibility for their training and learning and for sourcing learning which meets their needs, constraints and learning-style preferences
6. are often independent learners - self-directed and with a clear idea of their own purpose for undertaking training
7. highly value peer support, mentoring and tutoring
8. value and respond to supportive and responsive teachers, tutors and volunteers
9. want clear and explicit instructions, with print and web-based resources designed to accommodate age-affected sight and hearing
10. generally feel more comfortable learning with a similar aged cohort.” (Taylor 2004)

Research from Hong Kong (Ng 2002) also showed a preference for learning with those of a similar age, the importance of family and peer support, and the need for practical work.

According to the Australian research, the ideal ICT tutor for adults should have:

- a high level of ICT skill and confidence
- extensive literacy teaching/training experience

a background in working with adult learners and an understanding of the principles of adult learning
the ability to identify and understand the needs of the learners and to adapt sessions and courses to these needs.

The tutor of ICT working with older adults performs many roles, not just “instructor” or “expert”, and should change from being “the proverbial 'sage on the stage' to the 'guide on the side'” (Shneiderman 1998).

Japanese research (Umemuro and Shirokane 2003) shows that confidence and enthusiasm are factors in improving computer skills. It may be useful to show new students examples of work by previous classes, particularly if the work is that of a novice. Agre (1994) suggests that, for computer skills, “the best way to learn is through apprenticeship, that is doing some real task together with someone who has skills that you don't have.” Bilderback (1992) and Parham (2003) agree, both indicating that making mistakes is part of the process. On a practical level, Bean and Laven (2003) recommend numbered instructions.

According to Morris (1992), “many older adults do not wish to be placed in a learning environment which places them in direct comparison with younger learners.” He quotes one student who says “There is a great advantage for us senior students to be in a class composed entirely of our peers. There is no tendency for the instructor to cater to or grandstand in front of young and more alert students who grew up in the era of modern technology.” Alm, Gregor & Newell (2002) stress the value of the older instructor as a role model. Ann Rickson of Senionet agrees that “People feel extremely intimidated by the material and it’s especially intimidating if someone in their early 20s is teaching them” though others believe that this is less important if the trainer can adjust his instructional style to suit older students (Filipczak 1998). More repetition and practice is needed by older students. (Bean and Laven 2003)

One type of peer support is ‘buddying’. At the University of Strathclyde Senior Studies Institute computer buddy sessions prepare novices for attendance at full courses. The 'buddy' provides:

“... an informal friendly introduction rather than an instructor/student situation. I regard it as an opportunity to facilitate the learning process especially if the learner is a complete newcomer. I clearly recall my sense of trepidation, not to mention desperation, during my first computer experience.” (Masson 2003)

The role of the buddy is

“Firstly, they help people learn what they want to know. Secondly they help new learners discover what else they might do. And thirdly, buddies share some of the things they have found useful from their own experience. The prime task is to focus on the student - not on the technology”. (Bissland 2003)

Notes

¹Pew Internet & American Life Project survey conducted January 9 – February 4, 2006. Are “Wired Seniors” Sitting Ducks? April 2006
http://www.pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_Wired_Senior_2006_Memo.pdf

²<http://www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/aboutus/2007/feb/surfer.asp>

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Conference After Dinner Speech

LEARNING IN LATER LIFE – THE BIGGER PICTURE

Professor Brian Groombridge

Brian played a part in the early history of 3Ls classes at Strathclyde University
He links the SSI into the bigger picture.

In her opening words, Lesley Hart bracketed ‘celebration and cerebation’. It’s a privilege for me to have this opportunity to continue briefly with both. In this low festive light, I can’t see everyone, but I can hear you all joining me with ebullient cheers of congratulation for our Strathclyde colleagues on this important anniversary. I’ve also been asked to celebrate a bit, linking this occasion to a bigger picture - although you can’t get much bigger than we’ve had from this rich conference so far and we still have another day to go!

I’ll look back to some of the Senior Studies Institute’s predecessors, take a brief look at the current political scene in Scotland, and make just three suggestions for the future.

Predecessors: I must start with the United States, acknowledging to the Americans here with us today were decades ahead of us in their pioneering contributions to gerontology and the widespread establishment of university institutes of later life learning. The White House Conferences on Ageing were started by President Harry Truman in 1950; they’re still held every ten years - the most recent in 2005. The very name ‘Senior Studies Institute’ came from Canada.

Les Universites du Troisieme Age were also ahead of us. Invented in 1973 by the pioneer Pierre Vellas, University of Toulouse, they spread rapidly through the French-speaking world and beyond. Frank Glendenning and I helped bring the idea to the UK; then that creative social entrepreneur Michael Young and his colleagues turned it into an independent voluntary organisation, a national study circle movement for older people. In fact, there’s another anniversary to celebrate: the U3A in this country is 25 this year. My colleague Stanley Miller, speaking at this conference, is the first British president ever of the International Association of Third Age Universities.

There’s another link: the bioengineer Professor Robert Kenedi, to whom Lesley paid tribute, was also inspired by this French innovation; and he in turn inspired Graham Hills and Lesley to create the Senior Studies Institute. Robert Kenedi heard about the French U3A from an Open University television programme, and I must say something more about the OU. When the OU was set up, a large proportion of the students, indeed many of the very best students, were older people, not attracted for various reasons by traditional forms of adult or higher education. And we should also remember that the existence, the unprecedented scale, and the international success of the OU, owe a great deal to two Scots I was lucky enough to work with them both on the OU Planning Committee: Jennie Lee was the minister in charge at the time; and Walter Perry, the first vice-chancellor, was a ‘medic’ from Edinburgh University.

At first both the U3A and the OU met serious opposition from the adult education establishment and from nearly all the traditional universities’ vice-chancellors in Britain. When Strathclyde University wanted to create the Senior Studies Institute, the resistance wasn’t so strong but there were problems. There’d been no real worries when those experimental courses were tried out, but when they were so successful that the SSI was proposed, the Deans of Faculty had serious misgivings. Graham Hills arranged for me and a colleague called Dr Sidney Jones to meet them. Sidney was in charge of teacher training for the North London Polytechnic; the programme he started for older people was a great success, and we worked together setting up one of the first two U3As in the UK. I’d also seen the OU and the U3A at work - both in this country and France

- so Sidney and I must have reassured the Deans that the SSI was a bold but appropriate innovation for the university.

Present and Future: Twenty years later, I'd like to suggest three out of many possible lines of action for the Institute.

(1) The recent elections in Scotland have had no clear outcome, so no majority coalition government can be formed. It seems that policy issues will be decided one by one, but the Parliament is very conscious that any government will have to plan for a future in which the increasing numbers of older people must play a part. The SSI's ability to promote research conducted by or with older people - the EncourAGE arts project we heard about today is an example - could be a real asset to Scotland and beyond.

(2) Given the global reach of this conference, 'beyond' could take many forms in many places. I believe the whole UK would benefit if the SSI could build on their links with the European Union (remembering for instance that Lesley Hart has had a leading position in the European Association for the Education of Adults).

(3) Finally and closer to home: a few years ago another Scottish friend, Vi Hughes, former senior tutor at Ruskin College Oxford, invented a scheme called Ransackers. She named it after the Gaelic word *rannsachadh*, originally a Viking word, so it *can* mean plunder, but it also means seek out - search - even research.

If you're a Ransacker, you are an older person who has had no previous opportunity in higher education. You spend a *whole term* at a residential college doing research on a subject *of your choice* - not a course on the curriculum. It's going well at Ruskin College Oxford, Hillcroft College Surbiton, and Fircroft College Birmingham - but alas not yet at their Scottish equivalent, Newbattle Abbey. Another version is being developed at Brighton University, and it could be productive for the University of Strathclyde to join in. The soundings I've taken are encouraging.

It's time to get back to celebration, congratulating the SSI, thanking Brian McKechnie and his team, raising another cheer to our hosts as an overture to the *ceilidh* band and the dancing.

Brian Groombridge
10th May, 2007.

EUROPEAN CULTURAL CAPITALS AND THE EURO+ SONGFESTIVAL MUSIC MATTERS

Conny Groot, Director Catharsis Productions, Stichting Euro+ Songfestival

Abstract

It seems such a simple thing and yet. Erecting a stage for the voices of the culturally diverse 50+ is a logical thing to do during a cultural capital of Europe year. Of course, age differs from babyboomer to straight-out senior, the older inhabitants of the vastly changing European Cultural Capitals have a contribution to make to the programme. Coming from all over the world they brought together with their workability, their love for music.

1.1. 2001/The Euro+ Songfestival with its three time experience in Rotterdam, Porto and other cities provides a format in which the European singing talents can flourish and excel. Started during the Rotterdam Cultural Capital of Europe year in 2001, the festival has learned a lot since then about talent development for the musically inclined 50+. At first it was a competition oriented festival. As such it was very successful. Not in the least because of the co-operation with the Music Academy of Rotterdam providing the festival with plenty of youthful musicians to accompany the 50+ singers.

1.2. 2004/5 Edition. Having learned from the 2001 festival, the emphasis has changed from competition to talent development for the over 50. Especially since it shows that most are very good, giving it their utmost to perform with their favourite, heartfelt song. But unlike now, most people older than 50 did not know the benefits of arts education during school. Now, with more free time and a much higher life expectancy, the need for a new part, as a person with self-esteem and a talent worth to develop, is emerging. Today the Euro+ Songfestival provides masterclasses and workshops for everyone interested to participate. The masters come from the different music cultures. For example: from the Caribbean, Chinese Cantonese Opera, Turkish, Opera, Classical.

2. MATTERS TO EXCHANGE

Growing towards a showcase festival - positively influencing Images of Ageing - it has been the ambition of the Euro+ Songfestival from the start to work on an European exchange with following Cultural Capital of Europe years. Not only because it is so much fun for the participants to perform elsewhere in Europe. But also because the – intercultural and intergenerational - format of the Songfestival is very well suited to start within a cultural capital year, to continue and develop onwards.

Conny Groot

Studied Theatrical Sciences at University of Amsterdam: specialised in cultural participation from sociological and psychological viewpoint. Currently completing a Masters on intergenerational audience development for European Art & Media Management. Passionate about art & culture, running, yoga, travel and animals; hopes Age-Culture Net grows into a vibrant European network of talent development programmes.

Introduction

Did you know that at the start of the 19th century 4% of the population was older than 65? In 1994 13% and in 2050, 22%? There are more 85 year olds than ever and the centenarians are the fastest growing group! We are moving from a youth culture to one dominated by seniors. That

calls for moral questions that are yet unanswered. These questions are about the quality of life. Technically speaking one can get very old. But under what circumstances?’²⁴

When I get older, losing my hair, many years from now, will you still be sending me a Valentine, Birthday greetings, bottle of wine?²⁵

1. MUSIC MATTERS

It seems such a simple thing and yet. Erecting a stage for the voices of the culturally diverse 50+ is a logical thing to do during a cultural capital of Europe year. Of course, age differs from baby boomer to straight-out senior, the older inhabitants of the vastly changing European Cultural Capitals have a contribution to make to the programme. Coming from all over the world they brought together with their workability, their love for music.

1.2. The Euro+ Songfestival with its three time experience in Rotterdam, Porto and other cities provides a format in which the European singing talents can flourish and excel. Started during the Rotterdam Cultural Capital of Europe 2001, the festival has learned a lot since then about talent development for the musically inclined 50+. At first – in 2001 – it was a competition oriented festival with preliminary rounds (5) and a Grand Final in the Concert Hall of Rotterdam, De Doelen. As such it was very successful. Not in the least because of the cooperation with the Music Academy of Rotterdam, Codarts, providing the festival with plenty of youthful musicians to accompany the 50+ singers. Conductor Pedro Libert wrote for each and everyone of the contestants a tailor-made arrangement (75). Thus enabling everyone to feel confident in their own music. The choice is up to the participants. They bring their favourite songs, the festival takes care of the rest. The Grand Final in 2001, was a huge sell out: 2000 people came to listen to the finalists. Porto (also the Cultural Capital in 2001) invited everyone over to give a huge showcase concert together with the Portuguese participants). It grew to be one of the favourites of the Cultural Capital year to continue in 2004 with a second edition.

1.2. 2004/5 Edition. Having learned from the 2001 festival, the emphasis has changed from competition to talent development for the over 50. Especially since it shows that most are very good, giving it their utmost to perform with their favourite, heartfelt song. But unlike now, most people older than 50 did not know the benefits of arts education during school. If they did finish school, it was to go to work and bring up a family. Very seldom finding the time and the means to develop one's talents. Now, with more free time and a much higher life expectancy than ever before, the need for a new part, as a person with self-esteem and a talent worth to develop, is emerging. So the Euro+ Songfestival now provides masterclasses and workshops for everyone interested to participate. The masters come from the different music cultures. In 2005 for example: from the Caribbean, Chinese Cantonese Opera, Turkish, Opera, Classical. Workshops were taught in breathing techniques, movement on stage and the use of a microphone. After which the participants were much better prepared for the festival itself. Again selling out the Concert Hall - after 6 preliminary rounds (90 participants), with a staggering 2000 people in the audience. This time it was the European Commission inviting a showcase of the very culturally diverse participants to perform on their Greenbook on Ageing conference in Brussels.

2. MATTERS TO EXCHANGE

Growing towards a showcase festival - positively influencing Images of Ageing - it has been the ambition of the Euro+ Songfestival from the start to work on an European exchange with following Cultural Capital of Europe years. Not only because it is so much fun for the

²⁴ Anna Tilroe (1946) art critic and –historian. The introduction is from her book *Shining dust, Het blinkende stof*, Querido 2002

²⁵ THE BEATLES. Sergeant Peppers Lonely Hearts Club Band.

participants to perform elsewhere in Europe. But also because the – intercultural and intergenerational - format of the Songfestival is very well suited to start within a cultural capital year, to continue and develop onwards.

3. ESSEN 2010

The region of Essen and related cities has an industrial history sharing with Rotterdam the need to engage migrants and people of different origin in the workprocess. Cultural participation in the regular sense is often not among the priorities of first and second generation migrant workers. Most of them did bring yet unknown cultural richness with them from the countries of origin, the music from their regions. The Euro+ Songfestival has some experience by know in uncovering these treasures and enthusing and empowering people to make them heard.

Ideally the Festival can truly become *Euro+* by travelling to Cultural Capitals. Because of its language and cultural barriers crossing character the music of Euro+ singers can enlighten the hearts and minds of every European. Showing how much talent and enthusiasm 50+ has to contribute. And - in return - how much European Cultural Capitals value their very diverse seniors.

4. PARTNERSHIP & REALISATION

The Euro+ Songfestival organisation realises the Festival together with an intercultural and generational staff. Thus enabling young students from different backgrounds to find a place in which they can experience a valuable internship. Together with a senior programme called *Longa Vita* enabling professionals of 50 years and older to work in a stimulating surrounding. Well trained, keeping up their professional skills, the government supports the project by continuing their unemployment benefits if necessary.

The partnership with the Age Culture Network initiated by IBK Remscheid brings the Euro+ Songfestival not only in close contact with a lot of European Organisations that work along the same lines. It also provides the necessary support in organising and funding the heartfelt need to make a Euro+ Songfestival into a travelling 50+ Imagebuilding feast.

www.ibk-kultur.de

www.age-culture.net

www.europlussongfestival.nl

5. OBJECTIVES/SUMMARY

- a. Contribute to the shaping and consolidation of an enlarged and unified Europe by a better dialogue between generations
- b. Generate positive images of ageing
- c. Changing attitudes towards ageing
- d. Intergenerational approach
- e. Stage for age- and cultural diversity

SPECIFICS

The specific objectives are:

- Show(case) the presence of seniors in society
- Intensify cultural participation by culturally diverse 50+
- Stage intergenerational artistic excellence
- Intense communication
- Exchange with other European countries in showcases

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ELSE – ELEARNING FOR SENIORS

Sonia Hetzner, FIM-NewLearning, University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany

Abstract: *These days we are seeing more and more learning opportunities for seniors that seek to meet the challenge of including older people in the information and communication society. These training opportunities are mostly in traditional learning settings and less frequently in a context of mutual support where older people work in a self directed way. And yet seniors could be one of the target groups who would profit most from online learning opportunities, if appropriate e-learning scenarios are developed for meeting the needs of older people and dealing with some of their constraints. FIM-NewLearning at the university of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, together with six European organisations, e.g. the University of the Third Age (U3A) from the UK, have taken up the challenge by initiating the project eLSe – eLearning for Seniors, a Socrates-Minerva project, aimed at developing an overall pedagogical and technological concept for an appropriate e-learning environment especially dedicated to older people. Successful project results mean that eLSe-learners would learn how to use a computer as a gateway to virtual learning communities.*

Why is e-learning suitable for the older people? There are many reasons: e-learning comes to people and not vice-versa and e-learning works best for those with variable free time slots. Furthermore, it is a fact that due to their life-experience many seniors are experienced in self-management and are motivated to try something new. E-learning enables people to choose their own learning speed as they are not driven by others and enables them to repeat things as often as they wish. In addition, it should be emphasized that mentoring and tutoring can be done much more individually in e-learning.

The eLSe project focuses on three main development areas

A) *Development of seven e-learning modules especially conceived for the needs and interests of older people, following a carefully designed didactical concept. These e-learning modules are in part developed or at least reviewed by senior citizens with long-term experience in ICT training and the support of senior citizens. The approach is based on the immediate use and transfer of the skills learned, with regular retraining loops to consolidate skills already acquired and constant feedback.*

B) *Secondly, an open source learning platform has been developed and adapted for the target group taking strict account of pedagogical needs and usability. The screen layout is very clear and easy to handle, and provides only the necessary information. The introduction to using the e-learning platform is based on a three-step approach aimed at ensuring a stable handling of the learning environment and the elimination of existing fears. To start with, older learners learn how to display the content and navigate through the e-learning modules. Additionally, the handling of embedded media, e.g. simulations, demonstrations, interactive elements, audio and video elements is well explained and supported, for a better understanding online training is provided. Finally, the use of the communication facilities within the platform (e.g. discussion boards, e-mail, chat) are explained and incentives for their use are provided by the members of the support team. This phase is also extremely important for the essential development of a sense of community among training participants.*

C) *In the training phase, support related to content, technical aspects and motivational factors is provided in depth by the support team as a way of maintaining motivation and learning progress while paying attention to a range of individual differences. Feedback and self-training features are reinforced, complementary sound and visual elements are included in order to compensate for physical impairments and synchronous support elements are especially emphasised. Interactive elements have to be very clear and self-explanatory, leaving no doubt as to their value.*

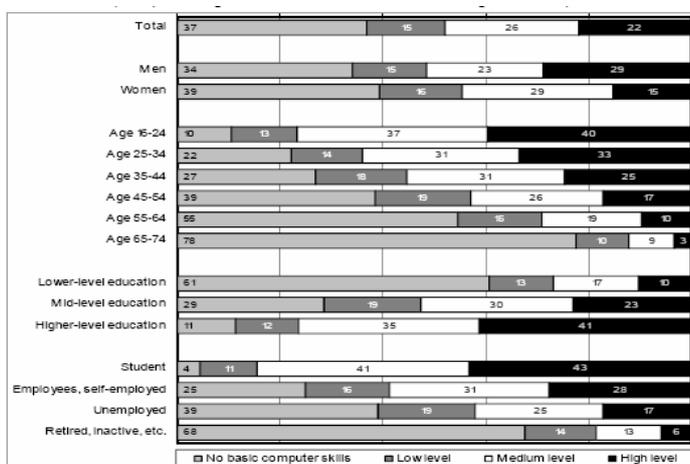
Sonia Hetzner works in the field of lifelong learning and technology-enhanced learning. Her research activities focus on the benefits of LLL and technology-enhanced learning for promoting the social inclusion of persons at risk of being excluded from the Information and Knowledge Society. Currently she is coordinating the EU-Project "eLSe-Elearning for Senior citizens", University of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany. www.fim.uni-erlangen.de

The 'third age' of human life is becoming markedly longer. The post-professional life span can become a period that opens up on new opportunities and new perspectives in an active and self-determined life. Besides this individual perspective, the societal perspective is of equal importance: due to decreasing birth rates throughout Europe, the competence and experience of elderly people will be absolutely fundamental in the future - in order to support the economical demands and to maintain the overall competence of European society. In addition, it is crucial to prevent the social isolation of seniors citizens and to ensure that ageing populations are able to lead independent lives, in order to be able to cope with the dramatic consequences of demographic changes and their implications for European welfare systems. Competent and meaningful use of ICT is a very supportive instrument in this context.

Stimulated by the advent of new information and communication opportunities, 21st century society is experiencing a major change in how information is distributed (eInformation), knowledge acquired (eLearning) and in how services are provided (e.g. eGovernment, eShopping, eBanking, eHealth). In order to participate in this increasingly complex information society and to keep up-to-date with new developments, older people definitely need competent communication, information and learning opportunities. Furthermore, due to the ubiquity and flexibility of new technologies, senior learners could benefit most from these.

Reality is different: senior citizens are very much under-represented when it comes to use of ICT in a competent and self-directed way. The digital divide concerns, to a major extent, the older population. A recent study by Eurostat on the use of Internet in the European Union (June 2006) has shown that three out of four people over the age of 65 lack competence in using the Internet and new communication technologies. For comparison, according to the same study, 63% of all Europeans now have access to the Internet. The survey highlights the urgency of renewing commitments to the eInclusion of seniors on the part of European and national authorities. The urgency in overcoming this obstacle is one important topic in the political agenda of the European Union and its Member States.

This is the current situation of a target group that may benefit most from new technologies due to the ubiquitous nature and the flexibility that the latter bring with them.



Graph 1: Individuals' levels of basic computer skills (2005) EU 25. Source: Eurostat, Community survey on Internet usage in households and by individuals.

ICT training for seniors

The need for a better inclusion of older people in the knowledge and more learning opportunities for the elderly arise to attempt to meet this challenge, but mostly in traditional learning settings and less frequently in a self-directed 'by seniors for seniors' setting. All these efforts have an enormous disadvantage in common: they are normally offered in large agglomerations and therefore reach only a minor part of the overall elderly population. They miss those living in remote areas (a big problem in most European countries) and the less mobile elderly (a problem in all European

countries).

Two questions result from this analysis: how can older people be encouraged to deal with this issue? And how can the necessary knowledge be effectively transferred to older people?

These problems can be overcome by making clever and opportune use of ICT for learning. One possible approach is the development of appropriate e-Learning environments, which meet the needs and the specific restrictions of elderly people. If this is successfully achieved, completely new perspectives can open up for them if they learn to use a computer as a gateway to virtual learning communities and as a way to acquire new skills. For many senior citizens, this would even be a decisive reason to use a computer and network, as has been shown in relevant surveys.

Why is e-learning suitable for the older people?

Depending on their physical and mental condition, seniors can benefit most from technology enhanced-learning if appropriate e-learning scenarios are developed to meet their specific, and very heterogeneous needs. In 08/ 2006 and on behalf of the German Parliament, FIM-Newlearning realised a systematic analysis of eLearning offers and concepts in Germany and in other European countries. The researchers found out that eLearning for seniors has not developed yet its own market, probably because of the high demands such development has. The researchers at FIM have come to the conclusion that eLearning offers especially devoted to the specific requirements of senior citizens do not exist on a sustained basis. There are some rather episodic offers, related to national and European educational programmes, which lack continuity. This is astonishing, of course, if we take into consideration that – also according to the above mentioned research work – older people are among the target groups that qualify most for technology-enhanced learning:

- (1) eLearning comes to people and not vice-versa. This aspect addresses seniors' frequent mobility constraints due to physical impairments, domestic responsibilities (e.g. taking care of relatives) or living outside urban areas, where ICT- training offers are available; (
- (2) eLearning works best for those with variable free timeslots. The Post-professional life is often characterised by free variable daily rhythm and plenty of leisure activities. In these cases, asynchronous eLearning offers are extremely adjustable
- (3) Furthermore, it is a fact that, due to their life experience, many seniors are experienced in self-management and motivated to try something new, a fact that well supports the demands of eLearning;
- (4) eLearning enables people to choose their own learning speed, as they are not driven by others, and it enables them to repeat things as often as they wish. These aspects effectively support the changes in memory processing that occur as we get older. For example, older adults have difficulty in novel situations in which they must respond flexibly to memorise things
- (5) in addition, it should be emphasized that mentoring and tutoring can be done much more individually in eLearning. A factor that again adapts to the individual needs of older adults
- (6) competitiveness and pressure to perform amongst course participants, which often is seen as rather a problem in face-to-face offers, is almost non-existent. The pressure of having to be as fast as the other participants declines extremely in virtual learning environments. This aspect is of major importance since third agers tend to have less self-confidence and are more afraid to make mistakes. In learning processes, fear leads to increased activity in the amygdaloid nucleus, which decreases cognitive processes

- (7) mutual support amongst participants in virtual learning communities is one further positive aspect. Community building is supported by personal and technical assistance. Learners are engaged in the whole learning and teaching process and gain self-confidence.

In addition to the research-based confirmation of the positive aspects of eLearning as a learning method and mode to best support older people in becoming engaged in, benefiting from and contributing to the information and knowledge society, a second, equally important reason for developing eLearning for seniors becomes apparent: the demand of the seniors themselves.

eLSe – a first approach in Europe

FIM-NewLearning at the university of Erlangen-Nuremberg, Germany, together with six European organisations, e.g. the University of the Third Age (U3A) from the UK and the BAGSO (the German federal association of senior organisations), have taken up the challenge by initiating the project eLSe – eLearning for Seniors, a Socrates-Minerva project, aimed at developing an overall pedagogical and technological concept for an appropriate e-learning environment especially dedicated to older people. Successful project results mean that eLSe-learners would learn how to use a computer as a gateway to virtual learning communities.

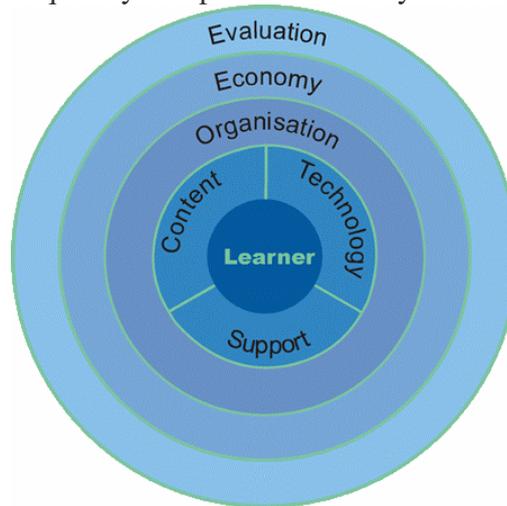
The eLSe project focuses on three main development areas

- A) Development of e-learning modules especially conceived for the needs and interests of older people, following a carefully designed didactical concept. These e-learning modules are in part developed or at least reviewed by senior citizens with long-term experience in ICT training and the support of senior citizens. The approach is based on the immediate use and transfer of the skills learned, with regular retraining loops to consolidate skills already acquired and constant feedback.
- B) Secondly, an open source learning platform has been developed and adapted for the target group taking strict account of pedagogical needs and usability. The screen layout is very clear and easy to handle, and provides only the necessary information. The introduction to using the e-learning platform is based on a three-step approach aimed at ensuring a stable handling of the learning environment and the elimination of existing fears. To start with, older learners learn how to display the content and navigate through the e-learning modules. Additionally, the handling of embedded media, e.g. simulations, demonstrations, interactive elements, audio and video elements is well explained and supported, for a better understanding online training is provided. Finally, the use of the communication facilities within the platform (e.g. discussion boards, e-mail, chat) are explained and incentives for their use are provided by the members of the support team. This phase is also extremely important for the essential development of a sense of community among training participants.
- C) In the training phase, support related to content, technical aspects and motivational factors is provided in depth by the support team as a way of maintaining motivation and learning progress while paying attention to a range of individual differences. Feedback and self-training features are reinforced, complementary sound and visual elements are included in order to compensate for physical impairments and synchronous support elements are especially emphasised. Interactive elements have to be very clear and self-explanatory, leaving no doubt as to their value.

The eLSe didactical approach

The **pedagogical concept** in uses the metaphor of an "onion" with different layers. The learner – a Senior Citizen - is located inside the most inner layer, surrounded by a first layer with content, technology, and support. The organisation, economy and evaluation shells are located in the inner

centre. Each layer can subsequently be split into as many fields as necessary. In the learner



Graph 2 *The eLSe pedagogical concept*

nucleus, some relevant factors like sex, age, nationality, number, prior knowledge, motivation, literacy level, physical impairments and disabilities, and technical resources are analysed. The learner as a group and as an individual is profiled. This profiling process is undergone in each of the participating countries. Common aspects and differences were analysed and its results had a major effect on content development – curriculum, pedagogical and didactic approach, and authoring process - on the technical system to use, software, remote access (depending on bandwidth infrastructure) and on the support infrastructure to be developed, basically organisation, tutoring and technical hotline. The technology, content and support fields mutually influence each other. For instance, didactic and pedagogical aspects have a major influence on technologies (e.g. use of video, audio or simulation elements) or, to give another example, the communication channels needed for supporting participants influence the hardware and bandwidth requirements. The organisation layer contains all actions to be taken for embedding the course; it focuses on quality management, course management, learner acquisition, tutor acquisition and training. The economy layer contains all aspects of learning and training economy (time, financial and human resources), economy of scale, fixed and variable costs, preparation and running costs. And, finally, the evaluation layer includes all activities and tools for a qualitative/quantitative, summative and formative evaluation of the system. The continuous process of evaluating the learner's satisfaction and achievement of previously defined goals will be embedded in the evaluation layer.

The eLSe-training includes 8 basic learning modules, designed to cope with the specific requirements of the : (basic computer skills, writing, e-mail, Internet and online learning. The main focus is on experiential, active learning. Real-life examples are provided at the beginning of the units for the introduction of a specific learning content and practice. The question "why should I learn this?" is answered in comprehensible form and connected to real-life examples. The learning contents respect the learners' heterogeneity: the segmentation of the content is adapted to the seniors' learning pace and attention span, different media (audio, video, text) will be used for the same content.

Experiences gained in the first trial of the eLSe –eLearning environment²⁶

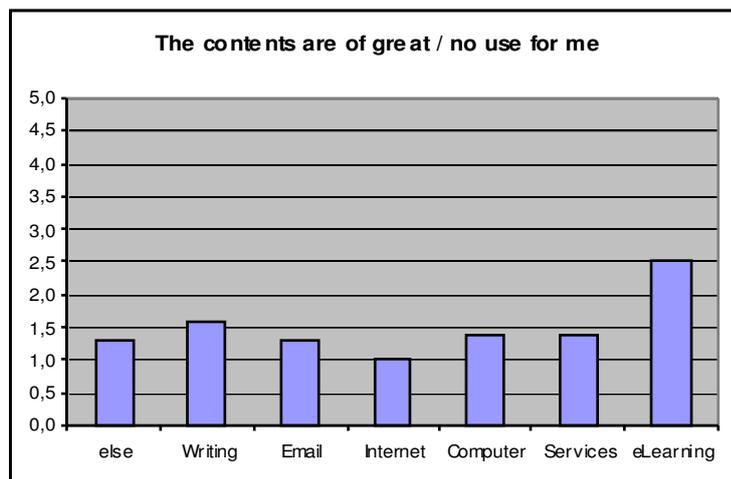
In the period of November 2007 to January 2007 a first trial of the e-Learning environment was conducted (currently a second one is taking place in Germany and in the United Kingdom)

involving 30 persons whose ages ranged from 60 to 84. The main focus of the trial was on the evaluation of the learning materials – modules, demonstrations, and exercises – as well as of the technical and didactical aspects of the learning platform. In Germany the trial participants were potential users of the system, means persons with almost no experience in ICT. In the UK the trial was rather addressed to persons with basic ICT skills, for an intensive quality checking on the units. During the project lifetime four further deployments will take place in Germany, UK, Spain and Sweden. In Germany and the UK the deployments have already started with 30 and 15 participants respectively.

The response to a first invitation for participation in the project trial was extremely high, that in a period of five days no further assignments could be accepted. This gives clear indications that older adults are willing to have the opportunity to participate to internet-based distance education offers.

First evaluation results

According to the first evaluation results the overall impression about the course and the diverse e-learning units was very good.. While asked about the changes participants would like to do on



Graph 3: Evaluation results from the Germa trial (11/06-01/07).

the learning environment fourteen out of sixteen participants stated that they would not change anything. Quoting one participant: “From my previous attempts to learn how to use my computer, I anticipated considerably more complexity and confusion, followed by frustration. The simplicity of the teaching method is superb, so that all one requires is practice time”. The question if the expectations have been exceeded or not met at all, was on average rated with 1,6 (1 exceeded and 5 not met at all).

Personal aspects

Most participants clearly highlighted that this form of learning absolutely adapts to their life style, which is rather characterised by the high need of time flexibility. The opportunity of learning and exercising as long as necessary was also a very positively rated by the participants. The role of the tutor for motivation, support on content and technical questions was rated as crucial for the learning process.

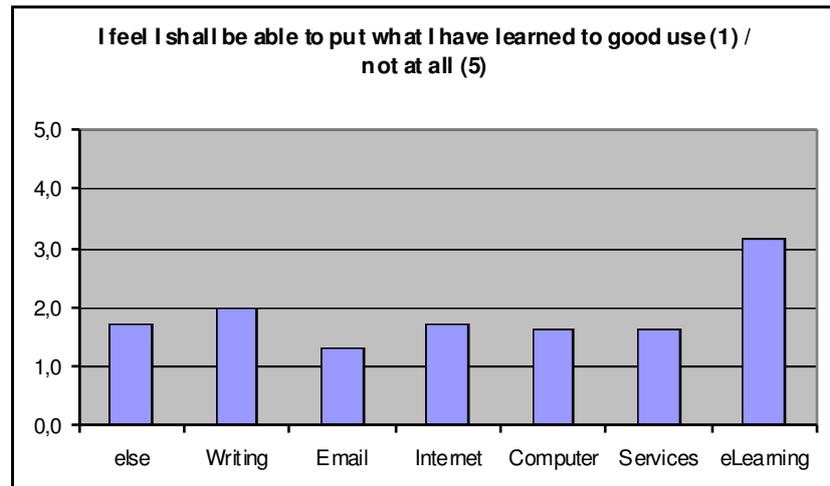
Graph 4: Evaluation results from the Germa trial (11/06-01/07).

Furthermore the participants have stated (average 1,7) to feel able to transfer the newly acquired knowledge into their day-to-day life.

Conclusion

eLearning can be, if properly developed and implemented an adequate learning form to promote ICT use for the older generation. The first results in the eLSe-a project developing the first European e-learning environment especially designed to fulfill the requirements of older people

learners to use eLearning and virtual information offers in an autonomous and self-directed way - clearly indicate that the initial assumptions on e-Learning for older adults based on the 30 years of experience on distance education and technology based learning at FIM-NewLearning, are being positively verified by in the project eLSe.



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LEARNING LIVES AND OLDER PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF LEARNING

Phil Hodkinson [1], Geoff Ford [2], Ruth Hawthorne [2] & Heather Hodkinson [1]

1 = University of Leeds, 2 = NICEC

Phil Hodkinson, Professor of Lifelong Learning, University of Leeds

Abstract

There is a tendency in research literature and in the policy approaches of many countries, to see older people's learning as an age-related activity, separate from their earlier lives. Whilst not denying the importance of explicitly considering the learning of an often neglected but numerically growing part of the population, we argue in this paper that older people's experiences of learning are strongly influenced by their earlier lives. The significance of this influence has become apparent as we analyse the data from the currently on-going Learning Lives research project. Amongst other things, this project has conducted a combination of life history and real time longitudinal qualitative research with 120 adults, many of whom are over 50. For those older people in our sample, this gives a valuable insight into their current and on-going experiences of learning, related to their past lives.

This influence is important for both the formal and informal learning of older people. Put simply, dispositions towards life and learning formed through living and learning whilst younger, enable and constrain their learning now. In the paper we illustrate this using two cases – one of a person for whom learning as an older person is largely a continuation of their earlier life, and one for whom learning as an older person is part of a significant transformation of their sense of self, arising from life changing events.

We conclude by arguing that this relationship between learning as an older person and previous experience has significant implications for policy and practice. This is because the dispositions of learners will influence what learning they are likely to engage with, and their reactions to both learning opportunities and experiences of learning. Consequently, provision needs to facilitate learning by a wide variety of adults, with significantly differing positions and dispositions in relation to that provision. It also follows that guidance provision for older learners needs to identify and take seriously a client's dispositions towards learning. Such dispositions can and sometimes should change, but bringing about such change is far from a simple, technical process.

***Phil Hodkinson**, Professor of Lifelong Learning, University of Leeds has researched on vocational education, learning in Further Education and workplaces, career development and decision making. Currently co-director of "Learning Lives: Learning, Identity and Agency in the Life Course" - a major research project which aims to deepen understanding of the significance of formal and informal learning in adults' lives. www.learninglives.org/cv/phil_info.html
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Introduction

There is a tendency to see older people's learning as an age-related activity, implicitly separate from their earlier lives. This tendency may be related to the historically novel position of today's older generations. Whether or not we accept the idea of a Third Age, it is unarguable that people are living longer and thus numbers of older people are increasing fast. This has rightly led to a focus on the needs and experiences of this expanding age group, in relation to health, work and opportunities (for many) for expanded leisure. This has been paralleled by a growing awareness that educational involvement declines significantly with age, partly in association with the ending

of people's full employment. Furthermore, the learning needs of this group of people are different in some ways from either young people or adults in fulltime work.

For all of these reasons, and because this is an age group where learning is under-researched and marginalized within educational policy in many countries, we fully support the focus of what is sometimes called educational gerontology. However, our on-going research suggests that attention should also be paid to the relationships between older people's learning practices and their earlier lives.

The research in question is the *Learning Lives* project. This is a large-scale longitudinal study, funded by ESRC, as part of its Teaching and Learning Research Programme (TLRP). The project is a partnership between teams in the universities of Exeter, Brighton, Leeds and Stirling. What follows is based mainly on data collected by the Leeds team. The main focus of Learning Lives is on the interrelationships between learning, identity and agency in the life course. We seek to understand how identity and agency impact upon learning dispositions, practices and achievements; and we seek to understand how different forms and practices of learning impact upon identity and agency. A sample of 120 people have all been interviewed about six times, over a three and a half year period. These interviews focus on the place of learning in their life histories, and also track their dispositions towards and participation in learning in real time, during the life of the project²⁷. For the older people in our sample this provided the opportunity to understand their current learning practices in relation to their earlier lives.

For younger learners, the significance of prior learning and experiences for current learning is well known. One way of understanding this is through the nature and significance of dispositions towards learning. Bloomer and Hodkinson (2000) drew on Bourdieu's work to explore the significance of such dispositions in relation to what they termed people's learning careers. Bourdieu argues that a person's habitus consists of a battery of dispositions that orientate them towards all aspects of life. These dispositions are largely but not entirely tacit, are often enduring, but can and do change. They develop throughout a person's life. The dispositions are embodied, not just cognitive and, for Bourdieu, are the way in which social structures operate through and as part of the person, rather than being a separate context in which people live. In relation to adolescent students, Bloomer and Hodkinson showed that dispositions to learning influenced the ways in which students responded to their college opportunities and experiences. In this paper, we illustrate the significance of dispositions and experiences in earlier life to the learning of older adults, through two examples. One is a middle class woman whose older age learning shows continuity with her earlier life. The other is a working class man, whose learning experiences dramatically changed, late in his life.

Anna Reynard

Anna Reynard is a highly educated and reflective 67 year old, committed to adult education and concerned about the pressures on it. This reflects one of her first and repeated statements: "I've always felt that education was the leitmotif in my life". She says she has always had a passion for learning. This encompasses a passion for learning for herself and a desire to share that passion with others; in particular with those from disadvantaged backgrounds who have not had the same opportunities to enjoy learning.

She is convinced that her parents history and education has influenced this aspect of her own life. Both parents did well at school, but were not allowed to stay on beyond a basic level. Her father always regretted this, disliking the bank clerk's job he was forced to take. Their father's

²⁷ The Learning Lives project is also engaged in analysis of the British Household Panel survey data, but that is not addressed in this paper.

determination that his children should achieve in education involved a lot of pressure, as well as the encouragement and enthusiasm. They were expected to excel in all fields, to do everything to the highest standard, to compete. But Anna loved learning. She said 'I liked reading. Education fired my imagination in so many different ways, and ... I liked the success.' She also learned from her father to value all people, developing socialist and humanist principles.

Partly through serendipity Anna eventually entered a long but not straightforward career as a teacher. Throughout this time, she was fired by a combination of perfectionism and idealism – the latter directed towards making a difference to the lives of disadvantaged students. This idealism partly originated in the socialist principles of her father, reinforced by her own experiences. She married a working class man who was then unemployed. They then lived in a council house in a deprived estate. She worked hard for her own children, and wanted to help make things better for others.

Much later in her life, Anna took a job a long way from where she lived in a difficult school which had a good reputation for pupil and staff support. Career changes were also fuelled by her desire to go on learning – about herself, and about how to be a better teacher. Anna never succeeded as well as she wanted to with the youngsters she most wanted to help. She found this failure to match up to her own very high expectations stressful, and eventually left the school, for a less demanding post, nearer home. She then jumped at a chance to study for a full-time funded PhD, when already well over 50 years of age. Her research was based around reflections on her experiences of teaching, particularly in that difficult but exciting school. She gained the degree and although she was pleased to have the award and status, for Anna, the PhD was primarily about the opportunity to go on learning in depth – about herself and about teaching more disadvantaged students. She said 'I wanted the opportunity to look into all these issues that were bubbling up inside me'.

When we first met Anna, she had just published the book based on her research and, although over the age of 60 and technically 'retired', she would have liked to get work as a researcher. She was working as a tutor in her local U3A, organising courses, and an exercise group. For Anna, her voluntary work as a tutor, like her earlier work as a school teacher, was as much about continuing her own learning, as about teaching others. The roots of her engagement in U3A, where she enjoys attending course taught by others as well as being a tutor, lies in her dispositions towards learning and education, formed in her earlier life. In her most recent interview, Anna talked enthusiastically about still learning about teaching as she practices.

She also talked about learning in relation to her personal life. Anna describes herself as being sometimes over involved and over emotional, prone to occasional outbursts of temper, possibly sometimes caused by frustrations when her perfectionism and idealism are undermined. Recent awareness that these outbursts can seriously raise her blood pressure has given her an extra incentive to learn to control these emotions. She is doing this informally, through reading, personal reflection and trying to deal with people better.

Although there are strong continuities in her dispositions towards learning, as with most other people, as circumstances change, so does their learning. After many years of a happy marriage, Anna's husband died. She had to learn to deal with bereavement, and then to get on with a new partner, whom she met through the bereavement group that she attended. A few years later he also died, and Anna went through the bereavement process again. She became very aware of her own mortality and adjusted her attitude to aspects of her life in the light of that, trying to allow more time for things she particularly wants to do for herself. As our fieldwork ended, she has recently started a new relationship with someone she had known for a while through U3A. She talks about the process of learning to live with someone different, with the same sorts of

enthusiasm as her other learning. She sees links with this and her wider learning about relationships and dealing with other people as groups and individuals.

Tony Wilf

Tony is in his late fifties. His life now has two principal foci. One is his family - especially his youngest child Clare, who is dyslexic and, at 20, still trying to gain more school level qualifications part-time at college. His second focus is the courses he attends at community learning centres. These help structure his personal time, as well as helping him to overcome literacy problems which have affected his life from school onwards.

Tony started life in a small terraced house with no facilities. The family was moved to a flagship rehousing project, which he loved. He had many friends and got into mischief but families looked out for one another's kids. He learned basic practical household skills. He also believes he learned good values for life. He learned at home not to judge people by appearance. Another value that he learned was that he had to have a job and pay his way. He was devastated when the flats were condemned in the 1970s and everybody was moved out.

Secondary schooling was a bad experience. He feels he was picked on by teachers, and has problems to this day with people who don't take the trouble to listen or don't understand what he needs. He learned to distrust teachers, to dislike education. He learned to cheat and skive, to value alternative activities, to gain kudos from the bravado of canings. He left school barely able to read and struggling to write in capital letters.

For most of his adult life Tony did a series of manual jobs, and describes learning on the job, supported by specific workplace-based training. His labouring work came to an end when he broke his hip. He was given a new, office-based job, supervising nighttime repair work for council property. Here he retained some of the male working class camaraderie that had always been important to him. He is still determined not to become 'posh' (more middle class) in ways that he believes his brother has. He coped with his limited literacy skills by inventing his own system of codes for jobs.

Tony describes his family as being of great importance to him. He tells stories showing his pride in his wife in her roles at home and work. He said one of the most important learning experiences of his life was the realisation of the huge responsibility when his first child was born. When his wife died he was devastated. He left work to look after home and the two teenaged children still at home. He learned, with difficulty, to look after home and children through doing it, with advice from neighbours and the children themselves, at the same time as having to come to terms with the loss of his wife. He had to do a lot to help Clare. She struggled at school both academically and socially. Visiting school to deal with her problems was something he came to terms with and he has also helped her a lot with schoolwork.

Reading and writing have been a problem to Tony throughout his life. He could have gone to classes and improved his reading years ago. His wife and sister-in-law had contacts and would have encouraged him, but it wasn't a priority. He enjoyed his identity as male manual worker and his experience of school was a serious deterrent. It was the need to help his daughter that brought him back to education. He wanted to help her to use a computer, so he went to a course called 'computers for the terrified' and enjoyed it. This led to a course on English, because he needed greater literacy to use the computer properly. He started English at the same local community learning centre but the course was not a success, reminding him of earlier bad experiences at school. He was ready to give up but his sister-in-law encouraged him to try again at a different centre. This time it was a success. The tutor, Joan, deals with her students as individuals and does listen! He was diagnosed as dyslexic like his daughter. A simple system of using coloured overlays has led to a big improvement in his reading.

He is keen to be able to read books, especially novels, autobiographies and local history. Joan found some simplified classics and he takes them home, turns the TV off and reads. In class Tony is encouraged to write about things that really interest him. They have free writing sessions on the centre's computers where he "loses himself" for hours writing about his own and his local area's history. This work has set him learning on his own, researching web sites to find facts, which his memories support. Some of the information on the library web site was wrong and he contacted them and he is now submitting his own work to them.

Apart from improving his basic skills of reading, writing and computing, the courses provide a focus for his life. When first he was at home all the time, as well as missing his wife, he was unable to organise his time. Having a timetable of courses to attend provided the incentive to sort out his days. The literacy group have become important to him as friends and as co-learners who are supportive of one another.

His current classroom learning is important to him but has reinforced his bitterness about his secondary schooling and how it and the teachers failed him. There is a precarious balance between the positive learning experiences he enjoys, and feeling as if he is back in an unsympathetic school. He has withdrawn from several courses where he felt under pressure or that his needs were unimportant to the teacher.

Discussion

Though Anna's and Tony's stories are very different, in each case it is easy to see the relevance of their earlier lives for their dispositions towards and experiences of learning as older people. We can also see, again in both cases, that their dispositions towards learning are intimately interrelated with their dispositions towards aspects of their lives, such as work, family and leisure. Their dispositions cannot be understood without an awareness of the way social structures, such as class and gender, work through them as individuals. In both stories also, we can see a complex balance of continuity and change, even though we have deliberately chosen them because they are contrasting in the extent and degree of change, related to their learning as older people.

We have argued in greater detail elsewhere (Hodkinson et al., 2007) that a person's dispositions place limits on their learning. A person's dispositions enable some learning, whilst restricting or preventing other learning. Anna's dispositions made a PhD possible. Tony's distrust of education and fear of becoming 'posh' would make this currently impossible, even if he had the necessary qualifications. However, dispositions do not determine learning. This is partly because dispositions can and do change, over time. One cause of change is the changing circumstances of a person. It is a truism that people change as they get older, but this is probably an important contributor to Anna's more recent learning about herself and about emotional management. The importance of changes in work and family is also clear in both stories. The Learning Lives data suggest that personal crises and dramatic changes in personal circumstances make entry into adult education more likely. Changing circumstances can change the opportunities for and the need of informal learning – as when Tony learned how to look after his family and the home. Finally, dispositions can and do change directly as a result of learning, and that can be seen in both stories too.

We conclude very briefly with some implications for policy and practice. The dispositions of learners will influence what learning they are likely to engage with, and their reactions to learning opportunities and experiences of learning. Consequently, provision needs to facilitate learning for a wide variety of adults, with significantly differing positions and dispositions in relation to that provision. Guidance provision for older learners needs to identify and take seriously a client's dispositions towards learning. Such dispositions can and sometimes should change, but

bringing about such change is far from a simple, technical process. Tony Wilf's story is a celebration of the benefits of good adult education with older people. It also shows how fragile success can be, in his rejection of the first English course he went to, and of other courses later.

Acknowledgement

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MULTIMEDIA COMMUNICATION AND E-LEARNING: LIFELONG LEARNING BY SENIOR LEARNING ONLINE

Sharing experience of teaching approaches, methodology and best practice. What works best?

Uta Krope, Seniors Learning Online (SLO)

Abstract

The group of “Senioren Lernen Online” – Online Teaching

- *SLO as a volunteer group of seniors (<http://www.senioren-lernen-online.de/aboutus.htm>)*
- *Introduction into the learning concept of SLO (<http://www.ict50plus.uji.es/eng/results/slo-method.pdf>)*

Introduction into different forms of multimedia communication

- *Examples of new asynchronous multimedia communication (web 2.0 :Web log, flickr, pod cast)*
- *Demonstrations of synchronous multimedia interactions with real partners in other countries (Internet telephony (Skype), web conferences, virtual classroom)*

The Grundtvig project ICT50 plus (Information and communication technology for fifty plus –ICT50plus) as an example for lifelong and distance learning and project communication” (<http://www.ict50plus.uji.es/deu/index-de.htm>)

- *Project communication (Mailinglist, BSCW (basic support cooperative working), forum, web conference, virtual classroom)*
- *virtual classroom lessons, contributions by SLO, about*
 - *arts “sunflowers of van Gogh”*
 - *about nutrition and health,*

Discussion about the topic -

“Multimedia communication in national and international working groups.”

Uta Krope: *Diplom-Kaufmann, Oberstudienrätin retired (2004). Background in management and business studies, teacher in a vocational school and teacher in-service training institute (ICT and online teaching). After retirement working as a teacher in the group of Senior-Learning-Online (fomated 2002), offering online courses, participating in a Grundtvig project ICT50plus. Playing in a reed section of a big-band.*

This topic shall be approached as follows:

Index:

1. Concepts: Multimedia communication, eLearning, lifelong learning
2. Presentation of the “Senioren-Lernen-Online” group
3. Introduction into different types of multimedia communication
 - a. General
 - b. Used by SLO
 - c. Online presentation
4. Online communication in the Grundtvig Project ICT 50 plus
5. Discussion on various communication means in national and international workgroups

1. Concepts: Multimedia communication, eLearning, lifelong learning

Multimedia communication, as I see it, is to exchange views with one or several partners using various media. These media include the conventional radio, television and print media, but also the new audio-visual media such as CD, DVD and, of course, the internet. In the

case of online communication a number of persons at different locations use and share various media, such as image, sound, video or telephone via the internet. This can occur simultaneously (for example, via internet telephony, voice chat) or at different times (in forums, blogs).

eLearning is possible in several ways with the help of a computer access to the internet.

Here I am going to concentrate on eLearning in connection with the internet:

- ❖ synchronously in a virtual classroom
- ❖ asynchronously in web or computer based training types
- ❖ in a mixture thereof, as, for example, it is used in the web based English school of Englishtown (<http://www.englishown.com>): Learning takes place in a virtual classroom as well as via comprehensive and diversified media in the web. Listening comprehension and pronunciation skills are trained via simulations. By means of instructed exercises the participants work on thematically structured grammar, reading, writing and pronunciation practices. Pronunciation errors can be corrected with the help of a video based pronunciation device. Partner games with classmates are offered and the participants receive detailed information on their own improvements.

Within the subject of learning a discussion is going on **how** learning works. A difference is made between formal and informal learning. Formal learning takes place in school, it is tied to a predefined curriculum and is oriented towards the teacher. Informal learning is freed therefrom. Learning has its roots in the learner himself and occurs as a consequence of curiosity in a thing, by trying and errors or by purposefully questioning an expert.

Jay Cross mapped out his thoughts with the help of a learning mixer
<http://informl.com/?p=702>.

The Learning Mixer

	Formal				Informal
Control	Top-down, strict, tight	Some self-directed			Bottom-up, peer-to-peer, laissez-faire
Delivery	Courses, LMS, Push	Workshops			Conversations, learnscapes, Pull
Duration	Hours	15 minutes			3 minutes max
Content	Curriculum, what they say	Class + OJT			Discovery, what learner needs
Timing	Before or after work	In between work			During work
Author	Instructional designer	SME			Learner
Time to develop	Months	Days			Minutes

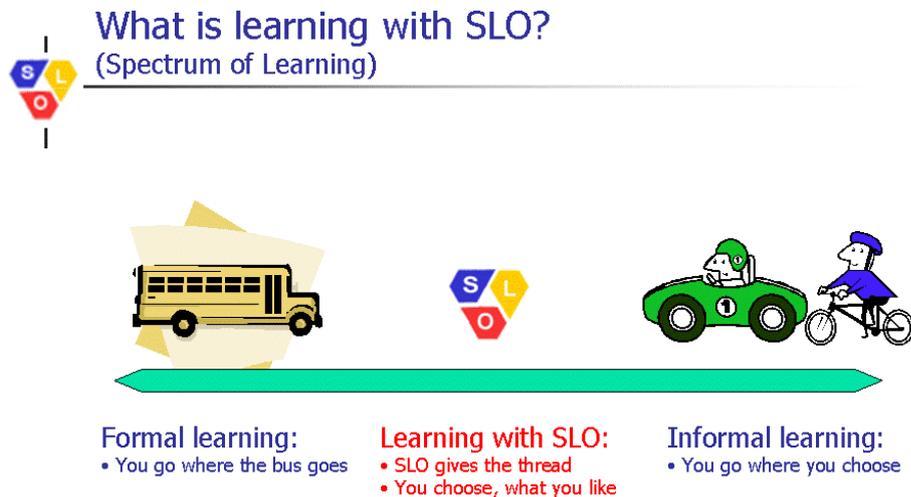
copyright Jay Cross  <http://informl.com/?p=702>

Lifelong learning exceeds the structured academic learning. It may be self-directed, but this is not a must (formal and informal learning).

2. Presentation of the “Senioren-Lernen-Online” group

We are a volunteer group of seniors. We want to enable other seniors to learn, irrespectively of their place of residence. We want to help them to use modern media and to inspire to lifelong learning. Our moderators organize and carry out their courses in own responsibility. Therefore: “Made by seniors for seniors”.

Our learning concept is presented in this picture:
(<http://www.ict50plus.uji.es/eng/results/slo-method.pdf>)



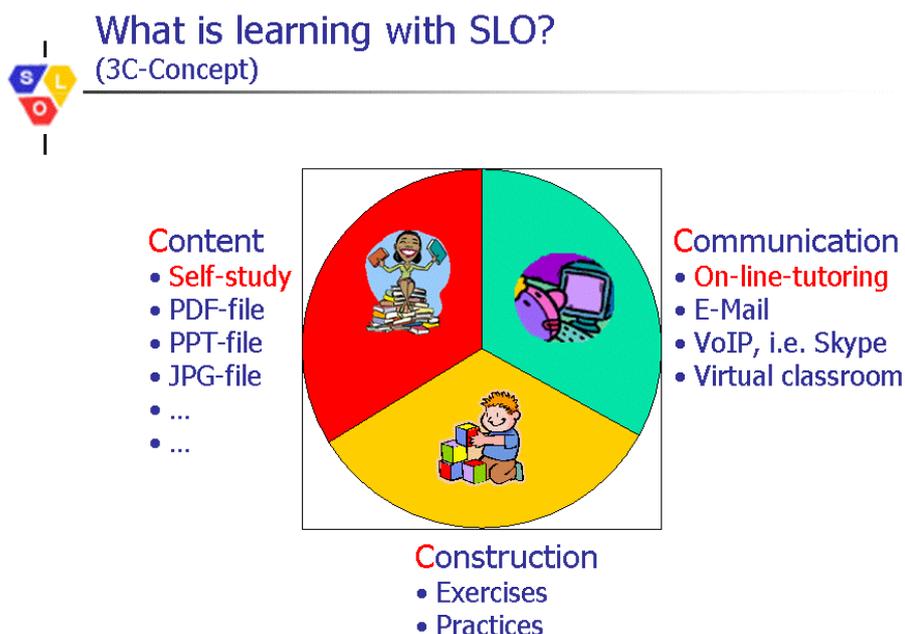
© Jay Cross <http://internettime.com>

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2

Our courses are structured as follows:



26.02.2007

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3. Introduction into various multimedia communication means

a. General

	Web 2.0 applications (examples/providers)
Mailing list, Mailing traffic accessible in the web Documents/data accessible to everyone Roundtable discussion (forum)	Google Groups/Google
Shared calendar	Google Calendar/Google
Working on a shared document	Google Docs/Google
Shared picture gallery	Flickr/ http://www.flickr.com/ Picasa at Google
Reports on events, incidents, general information as a diary, BLOG	Blogger / http://www.blogger.com/start
Podcast (a media file that is distributed over the Internet)	Podster/ http://www.podster.de/view/889 http://www.podstar.com/
Social bookmarking	Del.icio.us/ http://del.icio.us is a social bookmarking website http://www.mister-wong.de/user/hedde/sheimer/podster/
Collect information/news (Subscribe to and collect web feeds) Sources of information	Google Reader/ http://www.google.com/reader/
Individual phone calls Conference calls	Internet telephony via Skype teleconference/ http://www.skype.com
Talking about materials via web conferences WebDialogs Unyte is a free web conferencing software that offers free web conference calling to Skype users.	Vyew/ http://vyew.com http://www.unyte.net/ unyte with /skype

b. Used by SLO

In our courses we offer an introduction into the various forms of multimedia communication which is embedded into our special subjects: We use the forms of delayed (asynchronous) and simultaneous (synchronous) online communication. We use, for example, the workroom of "Google Groups", we integrate our pictures via "flickr" and produce own "podcasts" for the lessons. We show our participants how to produce "weblogs" and "podcasts" on their own. We use synchronous tools like internet telephony for individual coaching or conference calls for group discussions, often together with another web platform, "Vyew", for displaying the materials. We also use "Google Docs", a type of shared document, for example, in a writing workshop.

In a course about online communication and project work, we show how to cooperate via "Google Groups", "Google Docs" and "Google Calendar" in online projects.

In SLO we have talked a lot about our learning concept, we have accepted and abandoned ideas. As each of our moderator works autonomously, nobody is forced to integrate this learning concept, but we see that everyone uses at least a part of it and adapts it to his or her own purpose.

c. Online presentation

We like to present an online communication with one or several participants. This will be made using the “Skype” programme, the “Web 2” tools “Google Groups“ or “Google Docs“ or the “Vyew“ web platform, provided that the technical requirements are available.

4. Online communication in the Grundtvig Project ICT 50 plus

The Grundtvig 2 Project ICT50 plus (ICT50 plus (Information and communication technology for fifty plus –ICT50plus)) is an example of lifelong and distance learning and project communication” (<http://www.ict50plus.uji.es/deu/index-de.htm>). The following countries are participating: Spain (senior’s university), Norway (senior’s centre), Finland (MS society) and Germany (SLO and catholic educational institution).

From the start we organised our project communication via online tools, as, for example, mailing lists, BSCW (basic support cooperative working) and web sites, including the forum. When we prepared the Grundtvig application we already used the virtual CENTRA classroom. We (SLO) have trained the project participants to be moderators for a virtual classroom and we ourselves have offered a course on the topic of arts, “Arts sunflowers by van Gogh“, in English. Unfortunately the other participants could not offer own courses.

In the meantime we have tested free web conference rooms other than the virtual CENTRA classroom that is subject to fees and we offered another course on nutrition and Schüssler’s salts to ict50plus members.

On the occasion of the meeting in Spain, Heidi Bellmann reported on the Schüssler’s salts course to the participants of the meeting, while she herself was still located in Dresden. In this ict50plus project we also talked on the different types of teaching and learning and they were also shown to us: The Spanish senior’s university preferred teacher-centred teaching (30 participants), in the senior’s centre in Norway the pupils were taught in small groups, the MS society showed the possibility to exchange information on MS in closed user group forums and thus to learn from each other. Furthermore Helga Spohrs explained the structure of her nutrition course on the occasion of the above presentation. <http://www.ict50plus.uji.es/eng/results.htm>

5. Discussion on various communication means in national and international workgroups

For closed user groups we recommend to use the already mentioned means of online communication.

For open groups the development of web 2.0 offers completely new types of cooperation. We already talk of “online communities“ or also “social communities“. “Online communities are informal groups of individuals or networks who communicate with each other about a common interest and/or problems over a longer period on the internet, mostly asynchronously in discussion forums or newsgroups. They exchange knowledge and experience, generate new knowledge and learn from each other.“ Quoted from: http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/Online_communities_engl_Beitrag_BIBBnews.pdf. “With reference to real-time, exact and self-controlled learning, online communities can thus be regarded as an important cooperative learning means.” (Quotation translated from German) Quoted from: <http://www.bibb.de/de/wlk8503.htm>

SUCCESSFUL LEARNING STRATEGIES: THE EXPERIENCE OF A COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL TURNED PSYCHOLOGIST IN MID-LIFE

Lesley Lawson, Doctoral Candidate
in the Social-Emotional Development Research Group, Geneva University.

Abstract

Mature students know why they are in the classroom. They are there to learn and to derive enjoyment and fulfilment from their increased knowledge. They intend to retrain, to change professional orientation or to pursue a dream. They compete with 25 year olds, grapple with new teaching methods, sacrifice the respect afforded to the 50+ and donate their leisure hours to study. This paper reviews the strategies that helped me to learn as a psychology undergraduate in a private American university and then as a fourth year degree student at a more impersonal Swiss state university famous for its psychology department. It addresses cognitive and affective needs and concerns both the student and the teacher.

Strategies: *Older and younger students do not attack academic challenges with the same tools. Fluid intelligence helps the young to cram for exams, absorb previously unknown material rapidly and solve problems in unexplored fields. Crystallized intelligence, based on a wealth of stored knowledge and experience, continues to develop throughout the life cycle and allows the older learner to excel. Curricula that focus on research papers rather than exams emphasize the strengths of older learners.*

Becoming a student later in life is a pleasure and a privilege. Nevertheless many mature students have given up a professional identity which is not replaced immediately with an equivalent substitute for their age and status. Taking a leadership role, establishing small study groups and giving presentations are ways for older students to reassert themselves.

Mature students also need to develop coping strategies such as Selection Optimisation Compensation (SOC) practised by the pianist Rubinstein who continued to delight audiences in his 80s.

Conclusions: *Teachers and administrators should be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of older students in order to assure motivation, satisfaction and academic success. My personal experience reflects this. I passed my BA with honours in the private university but had to overcome serious hurdles completing the required certificates at the Swiss university. In the American university 50 and 60 year old students were not uncommon while in the Swiss university students were either under 45s or non-exam taking over 65s. The mature student should choose subject matter and institute of learning with care dependant on individual objectives.*

Lesley Lawson, BA (Hons) MSc (Psychology) is a multi-lingual intercultural communications professional returned to university at 50 to become a psychologist. Four years and two diplomas later she is a doctoral candidate in the Social-Emotional Development Research Group, Geneva University. She specialises in attachment theory, romantic love and mid-life. Coaching, seminars with a book to follow.

Introduction

Mature students know why they are in the classroom. They are motivated to learn and to derive enjoyment, fulfilment and benefit from their increased knowledge. They are interested, even passionate about their chosen subject and are prepared to invest time, energy and resources. Their experience boosts their intelligence. Their ability to combine a pragmatic approach and emotions with reasoning can enrich the classroom setting. Life has taught them to explore the subjective as well as the objective.

This does not mean that the chosen path of the older student is easy. They may have to compete with 25 year olds, grapple with new teaching methods, sometimes sacrifice the respect afforded to the 50+ and donate a good part of their leisure hours to learning.

The reasons to learn in later life are as diverse as the learners. The over 50s cannot be grouped into one homogenous group. Chronological age as a form of measurement is debateable as age is descriptive; it does not explain the how or why of behaviour. Furthermore, the more people age the less alike they are. While two month old babies are reasonably similar in their abilities, two randomly selected 55 year olds are not alike. Equally someone of 50 is as much like, or unlike, someone of 20 as of 80 in terms of life experience and cognitive development. One explanation is that development up to early adulthood is standardized, channelled by society through formal schooling. Nothing similar exists for adults who are encouraged to live their difference and break free of traditional moulds (Labouvie-Vief, 1991).

Mature students are up against the social clock. Life stages are supposed to be embarked upon at specific times. The social clock serves as an organizing framework by which to judge when to marry, study, enter the workforce and retire. In 1965 Neugarten's subjects considered the best age to finish school and begin work as 20 to 22, a good looking woman as aged 20 to 35 and her best age to marry as 19 to 24 (Neugarten et al., 1965). Twenty years later Settersten and Hägestad's Chicago subjects felt males should leave fulltime education between 25 and 30, women between 21 and 26 and both men and women should marry between 25 and 30 (Settersten and Hägestad 1996). Fortunately people tend to set their own clocks according to what seems right to them in spite of the consequences of being early or late. It is unusual to attend university at 50 and I will discuss some of the consequences – but if the time seems right now, then why not.

Studies of development throughout the lifespan tend to focus on young or older adults, often overlooking those in the middle. The reason for this is simple; university students are usually young and available for research studies, the older and retired also. Those in the middle are less accessible. I would like to redress the balance by paying particular attention to students aged 45 to 65.

Reasons for learning in later life

The most likely reason to return to a formal place of learning is to retrain. Plans to extend retirement age in many Western countries are encouraging older workers to review their performance. They need to brush up their knowledge and upgrade their skills to retain a competitive edge in the work place. Other older students are pursuing a dream. Perhaps the possibility to study was not available when they were of more traditional student age, or they have developed new interests. In this connection I would like to mention a friend and history of art professor aged 81. She teaches four evening classes a week and introduces new topics every year. Her oldest student is 94 and one couple has followed her classes for 34 years.

Yet others decide to change professional orientation. This is my case. I had a varied and exciting career in intercultural communications before returning to university fulltime to study psychology. I had intended to become a counsellor. Communications is a profession for the

young in my opinion whereas psychology can be practiced by older people with life experience to share. I am inspired by my former English teacher who is still counselling students on choice of university in her 90s.

This paper reviews the strategies that helped me to pass a BA in psychology with honours and to complete the degree requirements to become a doctoral candidate in one year with a good average score for a 20 to 30 year old. The difference in results is revealing.

Choice of subject

This depends firstly on what is available in the area although with distance learning most subjects are but a mouse click away.

If the future student is retraining, and updating knowledge of their chosen field it is reasonably straightforward to find the right course although qualifications have to be relevant to the market. I had thought of taking an MBA in my early 40s but was warned that looking for a new job at 45, even with better qualifications, would not be easy. In the competitive business world the social clock is listened to more than in the liberal professionals.

People-based studies such as psychology and education where wisdom and experience are essential are good choices. My original plan was to follow my BA with a Masters in Counselling, an area where older people are appreciated for their experience and hopefully wisdom. Students in their 50s and early 60s made up half of the class I attended and many have gone on to use their newly-acquired skills professionally. Their backgrounds included housewives, human resource executives, entrepreneurs, a former priest and teachers. The group was predominantly female.

Choice of university

I began my studies at a private American university with a campus in Geneva. Classes were small – up to 20 students – so the teachers knew their students and the students their teachers. Questions could be asked and flexibility and a personal service were available. Each student had an advisor whose role it was to help choose relevant subjects.

Before enrolling I attended the orientation days. I was surprised to see so many of what I assumed to be older students present. I later learned that these presumed students were actually parents who had their own programme to help them through the empty nest syndrome. Indeed something was available for almost everyone. While running the reception one day I explained to an Indian student's mother that I was a student and told her about all the subjects available at any age. She was delighted with the idea but not sure that her family would allow her to study.

When I first sat behind a desk I felt self-conscious. I enrolled quickly in elective computer classes where the lights were low so as to be less visible. Soon I met others of my age while discovering that I enjoyed the company of the younger students and that we did have things in common. One of the events that touched me was being the "maid" of honour at a 24-year old friend's wedding. When the bride was asked about our friendship and our age difference she replied that as we had met at university we were equals. I enjoyed my studies here. I was a straight "A" student. In fact the highest average in the university's history was achieved by someone older than me.

After my BA I was accepted at Geneva's prestigious University. I needed to pass the final year to be eligible for a PHD. Even in the fourth year classes are large and often given in auditoria seating hundreds. Teaching is in French and the degree is in sciences rather than the arts which made this year harder for me than previous years. Professors are available to answer questions on academic matters – it is the administration and finding one's way around that is a challenge. Others assume that mature students know where they are and what they are doing even if they do not.

Answers to practical questions are obtained from other students, but it is not easy to ask when one feels different. A Japanese friend in her 20s who attended both universities complained of the same problem. Her reserved cultural background made her reluctant to speak to those she did not know. Eventually I started speaking up but I did feel isolated. My difference which had been an advantage at the small university was not here.

On the plus side the quality of the teaching is high. Several important researchers in psychology are professors at Geneva University.

Finally a state university is not as expensive as a private institution.

I would recommend older learners begin with a smaller university where they can feel comfortable, if possible. While mid-life students were not unusual at the private university as I mentioned, I met no others between 45 and 65 at Geneva University. Older and younger were both represented, but again those middle years were absent.

Intelligence; can it be maintained over the years?

New students wonder whether they are up to the intellectual challenge of going back to school after a 20 or 30 year absence. They should not worry, while it is generally acknowledged that some intellectual decline is observed with age, stability and growth in mental functioning is also seen during adulthood.

Intelligence, like age, is a complex subject. Lifespan perspective psychologists agree generally on its multidimensionality. There are many domains of intellectual abilities and measuring only one is not sufficiently representative. They also consider plasticity or the range of functioning and the conditions under which modifications can be made. A lack of skills in a particular area can be just a lack of practice of those skills or a demonstration that interests have developed in a different direction.

The study of adult cognitive development is recent, dating from the latter part of the 20th century. It takes up where Piaget, Freud and others leave off i.e. at the end of adolescence. Piaget ended cognitive development with the acquisition of formal operations at around 18. This way of thinking looks for one unique solution to problems that have not been encountered in the past and might never be encountered. As that solution is reached through logic it has to be right for the thinker. The same method will be used again and again which explains why people often reach the same erroneous conclusions over and over. The solution does not have to be realistic, it just has to exist.

Later researchers disagreed with the universality of Piaget's stages, estimating that no more than 30% of adults achieve the highest levels of formal operational thought (Kuhn 1992). Some researchers consider this fact indicative of a decline, yet others reason that it shows that adults develop in a different direction.

They appear to turn from being sure that they have the right answer because they lived through the experience to questioning who is right because their experience is not the same as that of another person. The conflict that can develop from this tolerant view point can be solved if emotions are combined with logic for Labouvie-Vief. She postulates that adults do not spend their time generating masses of solutions to problems but instead use their emotions and pragmatism in a social context that incorporates solutions they can live with involving compromise and contradiction (Labouvie-Vief, 1997).

When applied to learning strategies, this approach translates into linking new facts to something the student already knows, together with combining reasoning with emotions and feelings. Young

friends tell me not to delve so deeply, all that I need to know is that such a thing happens, not why or where or when. For them this is sufficient to pass the exam, for me it is insufficient to satisfy my curiosity and does not help me to absorb new material.

Change in abilities

Our abilities are not the same 20 years later – some are better others less so. Students in their 20s benefit from fluid intelligence or the mechanics of intelligence at its peak. Induction, figural flexibility, integration, logical and general reasoning all benefit from fluid intelligence. This enables young students to cram for exams, absorb previously unknown material rapidly and solve problems in unexplored fields. It is thought to decline as of 25 (Cavanaugh, J.C., & Blanchard-Fields, F., 2006).

Again age alone can be an unreliable measurement without context. My practical work involved testing of cognitive functions such as attention. The results of a 62 year old lawyer on the d2 attention test show that he is in the top percentile for any age. A lawyer who is used to examining legal briefs for the slightest error practices his attention skills throughout his professional life.

Studies have shown that with practice skills that have declined can be improved upon. The Testing the limits programme run by Kliegl and Baltes (1992) and the remarkable Seattle Longitudinal Study (Willis, S.L. and Schaie, K.W. 1992) have shown that adults can regain skills that were previously in decline or at least halt the tendency through practice.

To compensate for a possible decline in fluid intelligence, older students generally have the advantage of crystallized or pragmatic intelligence. Based on their wealth of stored knowledge and experience, it is maintained and often continues to develop even late in the life cycle.

This explains why exams with multiple choice or true and false questions are not easy for the older learner. They cannot benefit from experience as they could with essay questions. A large investment of time and effort needs to be made for an older person to pass this type of exam and the acquired information does not leave a lasting impression.

In a large university it is impractical to tailor studies to a minority, but a smaller institution seeking to attract a non traditional public could benefit from this information.

Obstacles

Becoming a student later in life is a pleasure and a privilege. Nevertheless many mature students give up a professional identity which is not replaced immediately with an equivalent substitute for their age and status. Telling others that you are a fulltime student produces anything from incredulity to amusement to admiration. I find that my new status as a doctoral candidate is much easier to use.

To boost my ego I enjoy taking a leadership role in establishing small study groups. I am generally the one to coordinate time and place for meetings, often offering my home as a comfortable meeting place. I like to give presentations where I could demonstrate my knowledge as a communications professional. I also practice a lot.

I use the selection, optimisation and compensation model (SOC) to deal with new material. Proposed by Baltes and Baltes in 1990 it is used to describe successful adaptation in late life. The researchers take the example of the pianist Rubinstein who was still giving concerts in his 80s. He apparently selected a smaller repertoire, optimised by practicing more and compensated for less strength by slowing down to accentuate the contrasts. In my case, I select the subject where I need extra help and form a study group to share ideas. I optimize by practicing continuously. Finally I compensate for my unfamiliarity with the subject by learning as much as I can about it.

Time pressures are another preoccupation for an older student who generally has family responsibilities that younger students do not yet have. Our lives are inextricably linked to those around us. The older student has to be organised – one 45 year old friend with two small children bought a bicycle to be sure of arriving on time.

Taking longer to complete a degree can be the answer. Many of the foreign students at Geneva University taking an equivalence degree are in their 30s or 40s. They opt to take the equivalence over two years to fit in with work schedules. In most universities there are possibilities to spread one's studies over several years which can be helpful to those with work or family commitments.

Finally a supportive spouse or partner is crucial.

Conclusions

The mature student has a lot to gain and lot to share through learning. Acquiring new strategies can be most helpful in smoothing the way to greater understanding.

5 April 2007

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Plenary Keynote Speaker (Thursday)

Transformations Through Teaching and Learning: The Story of Maine's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

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This wasteful, tragic process of disengagement will continue unless older people themselves can realize their worth and become their own agents for change. Marty Knowlton, 1975

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Overview of Lifelong Learning Institutes and Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes

In 1962, a group of retired New York City public school teachers approached what was then the New School for Social Research (now New School University) in Greenwich Village to ask if the school would design a program for them. The group was “dissatisfied with the unchallenging continuing education programs offered by their union” (Mills, 1993, p. 162) and wanted the New School to sponsor something more intellectually rigorous. Thus was born the Institute for Retired Professionals, the first “lifelong learning institute” focused on meeting the educational needs of adults older than the age of 50.

Lifelong Learning Institute (LLI) has lately become the generic name for a range of organizations and programs geared toward educating older adults. Since 1962 they have gone by generic names including *Institute for Learning in Retirement*, *Academy of Lifelong Learning*, and *Senior College*. In addition, individual programs have adopted names such as Plato Society, Gold Leaf Institute, Seniors Achieving Greater Education (SAGE), or Rivier Institute for Senior Education (RISE).

The more than 400 LLIs that exist in the United States today owe their guiding principles and philosophy of education to the serendipitous fact that those New York schoolteachers chose to approach the New School rather than some more traditional purveyor of continuing education courses. But perhaps it wasn't so serendipitous. Founded in 1919 as a center for “discussion, instruction and counseling for mature men and women” (http://www.nsu.newschool.edu/01b_history.htm), the New School for Social Research is credited as the first American university for

adults. It now is fully a university with some 25,000 students of diverse ages and backgrounds enrolling every year. In 1962, as today, it was a place of innovative educational programming that would have appealed to a group of older adults looking for interesting learning opportunities.

The administrators at the New School responded to the New York schoolteachers enthusiastically. Coming from their own respect for the abilities of adult learners, the administrators encouraged the schoolteachers to form a self-governing group that would be responsible for managing their own courses taught by New School faculty or the group members themselves. As the first part of a 3-year experiment, the school gave the group access to regular courses at a reduced fee and use of all of the school's facilities. The second part of the experiment became weekly study groups organized and taught or led by the members. The school administrators required only that the evolving "institute" be open to membership by people outside the original group.

From the beginning the courses were successful, attracting enough students/members to require waiting lists. The group grew and developed its own operating structure, and in 1976 hosted a national conference at the New School focused on the Institute for Retired Professionals. That conference spawned a group of institutes that seeded a movement across the country. And to this day, the movement owes its flavor and texture to the philosophy and mission of New School University. The following is the statement of purpose drafted by the New School University Commission on Continuing Education in 1984:

The New School does not set any limits to its programs in regard to subject matter. Whatever seriously interests persons of mature intelligence properly falls within the province of the school. History and philosophy, the social and behavioral sciences, literature and art, the natural and biological sciences, education, and ethics naturally take up a significant part of The New School curriculum, since these are the fields in which the forces of culture and change are most significantly active, and in which human beings, their institutions, and their products are directly studied. The centrality of the liberal arts is maintained and strengthened in every possible way, but not to the exclusion of other educational programs that serve a legitimate need for mature adults in a mature community. (http://www.nsu.newschool.edu/01b_history.htm)

Historically, the common characteristics of the majority of LLIs in the United States were and still are as follows:

1. Some level of self-governance, on a continuum from groups with complete autonomy as 501c3 nonprofit organizations to groups with a strong advisory role in the planning of courses and activities that are managed by staff of a university.
2. A predominately liberal arts curriculum. However, to paraphrase the New School, whatever seriously interests persons of mature intelligence properly falls within the province of the LLI course menu.
3. Teachers or study group leaders who are peers in age with their students. LLI teachers are either experienced faculty, mostly retired from teaching careers, or are community members who teach from a passion for a particular subject that is an avocation for them. In contrast, study group leaders are people who are willing to organize group inquiry into a topic (e.g., The Life of Thomas Jefferson, Women in Islam) without claiming any special knowledge of it. Here as well, the New School's promotional materials about its own university faculty set the tone for LLIs: "teachers who not only teach what they know best but also what they are most interested in."

4. Age segregation, either stated or de facto. Most LLIs have a lower age limit of 50 or 55.
5. Affiliation with a college or university, often within the continuing education operation of the school. Affiliation can range from a distant connection mostly on paper to full status as a department of the university.
6. A student body that is better educated and more affluent than the general population of people older than 50.
7. A strong sense of ownership of the program by its members. This results from the active role that volunteers often play in teaching courses, managing the organization, planning events and curriculum, and in many cases operating the LLI office.

In 1996 a retired rabbi in Portland, Maine, became aware of the LLI phenomenon and decided that the University of Southern Maine (USM) should host such a program. He went to see the president of the university, who admits that he was not particularly interested in the idea until his mother got wind of the conversation and told him that she thought he should do it, that it sounded like a great idea. The subsequent support of the university president resulted in assignment of the director of Extended Academic Programs to work with the rabbi and see what they could come up with. The two of them convened a group of local movers and shakers to explore creating what they started calling Senior College. In the spring of 1997, the group put on an open house at the university's student center cafeteria to ascertain the level of interest among older people in the community. Invitations were sent by mail using lists from libraries, churches, and other organizations that might have large memberships of older adults. For the initial fall term, only four courses, each scheduled to run for 8 weeks, were proposed. Expecting a modest crowd to attend the open house, the university's food staff prepared clam chowder and pilot biscuits for 150 people. More than 500 came to the student center that afternoon, and somehow the chowder and biscuits kept coming from the kitchen. Thus, this inaugural LLI event has come to be known as the "loaves and fishes" meeting. When classes began in the fall, nearly 200 people had registered for the four courses. One way the program worked to accommodate all interested students was to change the format of one course, a study of world religions, into a large lecture hall followed by a small group discussion experience. Thus began, albeit relative latecomers to the LLI scene, the University of Southern Maine's journey in older adult education. What has transpired since may be viewed as nothing short of miraculous.

By 1999 the rabbi, who was then serving as the volunteer director of Senior College under the supervision of the director of Extended Academic Programs, decided that the Senior College at USM was such a good model that he set up a meeting with the governor of Maine and proposed that the state fund the development of programs similar to USM's statewide. The rabbi interested a legislator in sponsoring a bill to that effect in the Maine legislature. Leaders of the USM Senior College traveled to the capitol to testify in a hearing on the bill, but it did not ultimately emerge from committee. What did emerge was an annual line item appropriation of \$150,000 into the university budget to fund a "Senior College initiative." That initiative allowed USM to hire a person to direct the USM Senior College and spend part of her time being Senior College's "Johnny Appleseed" in other communities. Several of the other campuses of the University of Maine System had created Senior College style programs of their own by this time, so between those spontaneous start-ups and the intentionally nurtured programs, there are today 15 LLIs in Maine. All are member organizations of the Maine Senior College Network (MSCN). The MSCN Coordinating Committee meets bimonthly via the University of Maine System's interactive video network to share information about local programming successes, plan an annual statewide conference for all LLI members, and ask for advice or experience with any issues that might arise in a local LLI. The MSCN is not intended to be a governing body, and the Coordinating Committee cannot make statewide policy or indeed any decisions that will affect the operations of any of the individual LLIs. Over the years each Senior College has grown to reflect the nature/culture of its

own membership, host institution, and local community.

Also in 1999, the Senior College members at USM decided that they needed better space for their classes. They initially thought they might be able to fund a building on the campus, but reality set in pretty quickly and they ultimately decided to try to raise \$150,000 to upgrade the campus classroom building where most of the Senior College classes were held. By the time the campaign was over in 2004, they had raised \$135,000 that was spent to paint the classrooms and hallways, buy new classroom furniture, and install sound amplification systems.

In 2000, what was happening at USM attracted the attention of Bernard Osher, a philanthropist living in San Francisco. Mr. Osher was born in Biddeford, Maine, and retained strong affection for his home state. He had funded a number of scholarships for Maine high school students to go on to college and was interested generally in education. Bernard Osher's brother, a retired cardiac surgeon, funded the Osher Map Library at USM. Bernard mentioned to his brother one day that he was becoming interested in what was happening in the area of lifelong learning. His brother told him that he should investigate the Senior College program at USM. Bernard Osher talked with the university's president, resulting in one of the university vice presidents and the director of Senior College being asked to create a proposal to the Osher Foundation. The two decided that the area that was currently underserved at USM and nationally was research on educational programs for older adults. They subsequently asked the Osher Foundation to fund a research collaborative at the Senior College under the direction of a senior research fellow. They would also hire a part-time public relations person to make sure that the research results were disseminated through media contacts and conferences, establish a distinguished lecture series at USM, and support scholarships for low-income LLI members. The Osher Foundation accepted the proposal and to everyone's surprise made an endowment gift of \$2,000,000 to the university to support what was soon to be named the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). The endowment funds a research collaborative that now includes the senior research fellow, a graduate assistant, and a committee of OLLI and MSCN members who help to set the research direction and carry out the studies. The public relations director not only publicizes the research but also the activities of OLLI and manages statewide and regional conferences on topics of interest to MSCN and LLI members.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, Sonoma State University in California had started an LLI program through its continuing education division. Although the impetus to start the program came from a retiree in the community, the model used was the Fromm Institute at the University of San Francisco. As a result, the Sonoma State program began as a continuing education program managed by paid staff with regular faculty of the university teaching classes for which they are paid. University staff designed the curriculum and determined the activities and policies of the institute. Sonoma State University became the second Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in 2001. At that time, the Bernard Osher Foundation instituted a regimen that supplies \$100,000 per year for 3 years (2nd and 3rd-year funding is contingent on completion of reports at the end of each year), with the possibility of endowment of \$1,000,000+ at the end of the 3rd successful year.

The Bernard Osher Foundation has now given one or more years of funding to 61 Osher Lifelong Learning institutes in 23 states and intends to fund a total of 100 institutes. The OLLI network includes lifelong learning organizations offering a wide variety of different models of programming to adults older than 50 years of age. The models include USM's volunteer/staff blend, Sonoma's staff-led model, and a number of creative programming options, including OLLIs at California State University–Dominguez Hills and University of Texas at El Paso in which lectures are delivered over cable television to the local area and simultaneously on the Internet to anyone with a modem.

In 2004, the University of Southern Maine was chosen to be the National Resource Center for the OLLI network. The national center is in many ways simply a large and mostly cyberspace version of the Maine Senior College Network. The center will exist to provide a means of communication among the OLLIs, a place to collect and disseminate useful resources, and a means for collaborating on older learner research, jointly planning travel programs, raising funds, planning and managing national conferences, and engaging in other projects that we cannot yet even dimly envision.

Thus, in less than 10 years, a group of enthusiastic volunteers and committed staff at the University of Southern Maine has built a program that not only provides a range of fascinating educational options for older Mainers but is now recognized as a national leader in the field. At the core of all of these activities however, and the primary reason why all of these programs and models and networks exist, is teaching and learning.

Peer Teaching as a Way of Learning

As we stated earlier, one of the characteristics that has differentiated many of the lifelong learning institutes from other adult education programs has been peer teaching, that is, older persons teaching and learning from one another. Although there were three studies conducted in the early 1980s exploring the nature of peer teaching among elders (Brown, 1981; Delaloye, 1981; Kaye, Monk, & Stuen, 1982), these investigations involved programs that were located in social service and community-based health agencies rather than in higher education. Until 2003 and a study we undertook in the Maine Senior College Network (Brady, Holt, & Welt, 2003), the educational gerontology literature was mostly silent about the nature of peer teaching in lifelong learning institutes.

This recent study of peer teaching explored preferred methods of teaching, how peer teaching differs from other teaching experiences, and the special challenges that are regularly encountered by those who engage in peer teaching among 48 faculty members in five different lifelong learning institutes in Maine. One finding was that peer teachers use a wide variety of teaching practices that include lecture, facilitated discussion, a studio or “hands-on” approach, course coordination (akin to a general manager), and a blended or hybrid approach that mixes two or more of the other approaches. In fact, the blending of methods was the most frequently used approach. One conclusion we drew from this finding was that mixing methods helps to maximize flexibility and allows lifelong learning institute teachers to be more responsive to the needs of their students. The ability and willingness to be both flexible and adaptive to learners’ needs are generally viewed in the field of adult education as core elements of good teaching (Brookfield, 1995; Brookfield & Preskill, 1999; Merriam & Caffarella, 1997; Palmer, 1998).

Not every instructor entered the peer teaching experience with a flexible *andragogy*. This term, with etymological roots in the Greek word meaning adult, was introduced into the 20th-century educational lexicon by the late Malcolm Knowles and is often used by adult educators to differentiate their practice from that of teaching children (Knowles, 1970; Knowles & Associates, 1984). Peer teachers, especially those who come to their volunteer roles in lifelong learning institutes after having spent long careers as professional teachers in primary and secondary schools, have to learn to become adult educators. This is potentially one of the most important ways in which elders transform through engagement in a peer teaching environment.

Unlike other educational settings—be they in K-12 or postsecondary education—in which students enroll to earn extrinsic rewards such as grades, diplomas, certificates, credits, and/or degrees, the culture of lifelong learning institutes is one of volunteerism and freedom. There are no tests, grades, attendance requirements, or mandatory assignments. Older students attend these programs to learn. Although there are rare occasions when this spirit of freedom brings about less

than desirable outcomes (e.g., people attend class irregularly, feel no compulsion to read in advance of discussions, etc.), for the most part it is a highly desirable situation for peer teachers. After all, what teacher would not want a context in which all of his or her students have one principal goal in mind—learning? Yet an environment in which learning and sheer enjoyment of the academic content are the primary goals creates a different set of challenges than those in which extrinsic rewards dominate. Because it is commonly agreed that adult students “vote with their feet,” the quality of the educational experience needs to be good—early. Peer teachers who are not sufficiently skilled or knowledgeable may find their class size shrinking by 50% by the second or third week.

Another difference between the traditional and lifelong learning institute cultures is in the expectations of the learner vis-à-vis the instructor’s knowledge. Although older learners do not expect omniscience from their peer teachers, they do insist on content competence and also, at least in many cases, a facilitator who creates a space in which the students’ own voices can be heard. At OLLI and in lifelong learning institutes across the United States, older learners may not expect their teachers to have immediate and definitive answers to every question. One teacher in our study put it this way, “In senior college students have many questions, and you’d better know the answers. But if you don’t they’ll be patient with you. They’ll wait until the next class.” Other teachers who were interviewed shared stories about their past experiences as teachers of traditional-aged college students and the fact that many of these younger people looked upon their professors as subject matter experts, expecting them to teach with an apparent high degree of certitude and even omniscience. This is not the case with the vast majority of older students in lifelong learning institutes. An experienced peer teacher made this comment,

I found the best thing you can do is to think of a course that you believe would be enjoyable for yourself....First of all is honesty. You need to stand there and say: “This is the truth. This is what I know about this subject. I’m going to share it with you, and there may be others who know much more about it and if there are, please tell us.”

The passion for learning manifested by lifelong learning institute students and the enthusiasm for teaching expressed by faculty creates an atmosphere that is significantly different from traditional education environments in which instructors more often than not see their role as providing knowledge to uninitiated learners. Peer teachers see themselves engaging in a conversation among equals. Everyone—student and teacher—wants to learn. The richness of the co-learning experience is, in good measure, made possible by the depth of knowledge and range of life experiences found in each member of the class. However, because these older learners have such breadth and depth of knowledge, discussions can be harder to guide once they get started. As one peer teacher in our study reported, “You get tremendous opinion statements. With 18-year-olds you retain the power to end discussion. But this is not the case with one’s peers.” This is yet another dimension in which, especially among individuals who come into lifelong learning institutes from more traditional educational contexts, teachers must change and learn.

Another especially challenging aspect of peer teaching is measuring expectations and seeking feedback from one’s students. One participant in our study talked about how he constantly asks his students why they signed up for this particular course. Obtaining a better sense of learners’ motivations helps his own preparation from week to week. Asking for and receiving information about students’ original goals and motivation for participation as well as about the curriculum being studied from week to week is important in the peer teaching process because it helps to keep the course on track. It also facilitates a culture of collegiality and nurtures healthy teacher-student relationships.

One of the risks of having close relationships between teacher and student involves the management of emotion. At times, intense feelings may rise to the surface when people are

writing stories or retelling experiences in class. One might expect this to occur in deeply personal classes such as memoir writing (a popular curriculum across lifelong learning institutes), poetry, or other highly evocative curricula. But sometimes emotions surge unpredictably, as the following peer teacher recounted:

We had one woman who I thought was going to have a breakdown because she was looking directly at the Brookside Nursing Home....She was obviously uncomfortable in the class so I said something and she said, "My sister is there. She's dying in that room. She's schizophrenic, and I'm looking right into her bedroom." So I said the first thing that occurred to me: "Why don't you come and sit over here so you're not looking into that room." She was dealing with a dying situation and she eventually wrote about it...and she stuck with it and dealt to a certain extent with the problem. But we did have a lot of emotion and sensitivity and I tried to be very careful of that, and the class I would say was very supportive of the fact. They were great.

The same teacher went on to add, "You must limit the class in terms of it becoming a therapy session" (Brady et al., 2003, p. 860).

Still another way peer teachers need to adapt and change is in dealing with the physical deficits that accompany aging. Students in lifelong learning institutes often have impaired hearing, vision, or memory. Teachers who talked about this in our study said that the students themselves are not reluctant to admit a special need. They readily come forward and say, "You're going to have to speak loud because of my hearing aid." The students themselves also chip in to create accommodations. In a class on Ukrainian egg dyeing, one student with macular degeneration was having difficulty seeing the lines. Both the visually impaired student and a classmate came up with the idea that perhaps a different colored background would help. The teacher agreed to this experiment, and the result was successful.

Another peer teacher commented about a fundamental change she found herself making now that she was working with older instead of younger students,

I find that with all the dimensions of the senior student there is the inevitable decay of the mind, of energy. I'm 87 years old but—I'm very conscious of this— there's all that resilience that just goes with age....I used to teach with a high degree of irritability and of intolerance of any kind of slackness or sloppiness in students' attention. I don't do this anymore.

Transformation Through Learning

Among the earliest explorations of outcomes derived from participation in educational activities by older adults were those conducted by Mary Alice Wolf at St. Joseph College in Connecticut (Wolf, 1982, 1985a, 1985b). The focus of much of Wolf's work was to investigate the impact of the educational experience on life satisfaction and self-fulfillment. A consistent finding that ran through these studies was that participating in educational programs was an "empowering experience" for older learners.

In 2004, the OLLI Research Collaborative designed a study to explore the specific nature of the empowering experience of participating in an LLI. We selected a research sample of 45 rank-and-file members at OLLI (i.e., individuals who were not serving as members of the board of directors, program faculty, committee chairpersons, or in other leadership roles in the organization). These were all experienced participants who at minimum had registered for one course during each of the previous six semesters. Their average age was 73.4 years (as compared with the general OLLI profile of 71.3 years), and 78% of the sample was women (as compared

with 72% in the overall OLLI community). Each of these 45 individuals was invited to join one of six focus groups. The focus groups were designed to elicit and discuss details about critical incidents and other experiences at the institute as well as the perceived significance of those experiences.

To nobody's surprise, one general finding from these focus group conversations was that members were intellectually stimulated by way of their participation in this program (for a full description of this study, see Lamb & Brady, 2005). People talked about the new and exciting ideas they were learning and the "joy" it provided. One man in his late 60s described his involvement as "an aphrodisiac of the mind." Another participant, a woman in her late 70s, reported, "The first word that comes to mind is *fun*." A third individual who was a retired teacher said that she had taken professional development courses throughout her career, but it wasn't until she came to this lifelong learning institute that she could experience "the sheer joy of taking a course and just being able to listen."

As we probed focus group members' comments, deeper insights emerged. Several people emphasized that despite the absence of the usual academic demands and controls, they found themselves taking responsibility for their own learning. One woman with advanced professional degrees commented, "It's interesting that not being required to do something, you tend to do more work on your own." The liberal arts curriculum also allowed a number of OLLI members to broaden their education beyond the narrow technical or professional parameters they had set during early and middle adulthood. Prior to enrolling at OLLI, these people never took the opportunity to study religion, poetry, philosophy, or music. One woman who raised four children and after they had grown up turned her care-giving attention to her frail elderly parents found that when she finally had time for herself and chose to join a lifelong learning institute, it proved to be "a wonderful outlet...to learn things I had only heard about before."

Many learners used the metaphor of "stretching" to describe their growth. They told stories, often with a sense of pride, about ways they were being challenged to think beyond their usual frames of reference. The oldest woman in the sample, a retired clinical social worker approaching her mid-90s, explained that she eagerly sought courses that were "mind stretching...This way I learn new things. I think new things." Other people talked about their experience of being intellectually stretched by way of their lifelong learning institute courses as a formidable challenge and one that was definitely "not for the timid."

One of the most important dimensions of active membership in OLLI is the experience of community. Participants in this focus group study consistently reported how they found the institute community to be a safe place to take both intellectual and emotional risks. Even people who had uncomfortable experiences in the past taking courses in a college or university and consequently came to OLLI feeling insecure about their ability to function well in a higher education setting talked about how their fellow students and (peer) teachers were respectful and welcoming of their input. Especially among women who had not been able to attend college at an earlier age, this sense of being accepted and not belittled or ignored was critical. One woman explained that because she had not attended college she did not know what to expect at OLLI and was, at least in the beginning, afraid. However, by "sharing with others in the community I learned to trust." Another woman with a similar educational background commented that, "There were no dumb questions...you could ask anything." We heard from focus group members repeatedly that even when there were sharp differences of opinion on controversial subjects such as politics or religion, as one member put it, "People really listen to each other."

The safety of the learning community provides a healthy forum for these elders to tell their stories and listen to others' stories. People feel free to talk inside and outside of class about even their most sensitive vulnerabilities—loneliness, health problems, poor relationships with family

members, and even fears about death and their personal legacy. No topic seems to be taboo. In the words of one participant, “You don’t have to be afraid. You can let your guard down.”

Attending classes and extracurricular activities in a supportive learning community has resulted in building self-esteem on the part of many members. People talked in the focus groups about feeling smarter and “more interesting.” Even the more introverted students reported that they have grown in confidence in their ability to make a valuable contribution to class discussions. Women especially felt that by participating in these educational activities they were finally able to get beyond the role of family caretaker. One described how her husband pursued further education to advance his career while she stayed home to take care of their children. Now, “If you saw me in class contributing and speaking up you would say, ‘Who is this person?’” Another woman commented that her participation in the institute “provided validation for who I am.”

Many of the women in the focus groups contrasted their experience at OLLI with earlier times when their participation in education was devalued or ignored. Sometimes this devaluation began at an early age. One woman recounted attending a grammar school where only the boys were taught science. Others described being intimidated or ignored in high school and college. Some found that this repression continued at home. One individual described her struggle to go beyond “the typical woman of my generation who stood behind their husband smiling and not saying a thing.” These and other women talked enthusiastically about finding their “voice” at OLLI. “You suddenly realize that women have so much to say,” said one participant. “We have a voice!”

Still one more area in which participants in this study reported an enhanced self-image was in their rejection of previously accepted stereotypes about aging. Often this was in response to the inspirational example set by many of their peers. Several members reported feeling an initial sense of reluctance to participate in a lifelong learning institute because they did not want to be “with a bunch of old people.” But once they overcame this initial barrier and joined the institute, they began to look upon “old people” differently. In fact, one of these reluctant joiners quickly came around to admire the ability and verve of her 70-, 80-, and even 90-year-old classmates, calling them “inspirational.” Another conceded that she had stereotyped older women as “just sitting around and playing bridge.” Now she saw things differently. One of the oldest members of the research sample said that seeing the energy of other older people at OLLI “was really a turn-on. I became less concerned about my body, how I looked.” A nurse in one of the focus groups, who continues to work part-time commented, “If half of [her patients] were in OLLI, they wouldn’t be in hospital beds.”

Engaging the Future

Some years ago a friend said that she would like to do a study on women who graduated from college at the beginning of the women’s movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many of these women belonged to the protest movements of the 1960s and were the first generation of women who started to challenge the stereotyped notion that women went to college to become teachers or nurses and find a suitable husband. They graduated into a society that wasn’t ready to offer them jobs in business and industry in the numbers that are available now. They are women in their 50s and 60s who are educated, experienced as activists organizing grass-roots efforts, and often in jobs or professions with social conscience rather than high salaries for some portion of their careers. They have not amassed large retirement funds, but they have voices and experience at bucking the system. They will arrive at the door of retirement and find themselves looking at reduced financial circumstances. Will they passively accept that condition? Add these to the thousands of women from earlier generations who are finding their voices through the transformative educational opportunities at LLIs, and our nation could be on the verge of new and exciting forms of civic engagement emerging in the next decade.

From the beginning, faculty and students at the University of Southern Maine's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute have expressed a desire to serve the larger community. In 2003, the curriculum committee and OLLI director launched a service learning initiative designed to create a service community within OLLI itself. Service learning has become popular in high schools and colleges partly as a way to apply classroom learning to the real world and partly to teach young people to be more like older people, namely, to assume civic responsibility and participate in the life of their communities. Typically this has meant adding a service component to academic courses, broadening the offering to include learning, service, and time for reflection on the experience...to derive meaning and knowledge about oneself and one's place in the world.

Although there are many opportunities for older adults to volunteer their time and energy in service to organizations and communities, there are few programs that offer service learning opportunities to older adults in an academic setting. Older adults are often the recipients of services in service learning courses, not the providers. OLLI at USM decided it was high time to change this equation.

The OLLI version of service learning involves offering courses in partnership with local agencies and organizations. The local organization defines a project that would be of benefit to the organization and with the guidance of OLLI leaders creates a course that includes learning, service, and reflection components. The course is then offered to OLLI students as part of the regular menu of offerings. To date, students have created a volunteer training program and updated the trail map for Portland Trails, tutored ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) students at Portland Adult Education, transcribed and scanned documents for the Maine Memory Network at the Maine Historical Society, and worked as conversation partners for English as a Second Language courses at the University of Southern Maine. Many of the service learning students have gone on to become regular volunteers with their respective organizations once their service learning course has ended. One organization commented that they wished that all of their volunteers could go through the OLLI service learning course. The OLLI leaders found this humorous because the organization itself had devised and taught the course—another of the many splendors of peer teaching! But it also said something positive about the value of the experience to the partner organization. The OLLI Research Collaborative is currently interviewing past participants in the service learning courses for an in-depth study of the effects of this brand of civic engagement on the OLLI students.

The Osher Foundation in the next few years will expend something in the neighborhood of \$100 million to support the growth and creativity of programming at lifelong learning institutes at some of the most prestigious institutions of higher education in the country, as well as less well-known state universities and colleges. What will this mean for the lifelong learning institute movement as a whole? And what will it mean for the host colleges and universities?

At the very least, it seems that traditional students will see active, engaged adults well into their 80s and 90s walking around campus, carrying books, and talking with each other about ideas. That will be a very different experience than the one experienced on campus back in the 1960s and 1970s! Perhaps the traditional-age students will even find themselves talking with LLI members on the sidewalks and in the campus centers of universities across our nation. And—better still—join them in intergenerational courses so older and younger students can have systematic and rigorous opportunities to teach and learn from one another. This is already happening on many campuses not only thanks to the large number of LLIs across the United States but also due to the fact that most states have tuition reduction or waiver opportunities for older learners who wish to take mainstream (credit-bearing) courses.

Beyond the obvious infusion of cash that the Osher Institute represents to a campus, lifelong

learning institute members also represent voters. Older adults are commonly regarded as more likely to vote, particularly in local and state elections, than the traditional college-age student. What sort of effect will participation in any lifelong learning institute have on voting patterns and thus civic engagement by older adults on education-related ballot issues? Will OLLI members in Maine and elsewhere demonstrate unique characteristics as voters, different from members of the general elder community or even lifelong learning institutes that are not OLLIs? Does participating in an institute that enjoys substantial support from a private foundation have any influence on attitudes about how public money is spent on higher education?

Most Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes have full-time professional or administrative staff. Some Osher Institutes also pay the faculty and use current university faculty rather than volunteers who may be retired professors or simply passionate amateur teachers. This distinguishes these institutes from the typical volunteer-founded, -managed, and -taught lifelong learning institutes that form the vast majority of the more than 400 in existence today. What effect will that have on the character of the Osher Institute experience? If a benefit of the experience of peer teaching and learning is a sense of engagement and empowerment, will funding and staffing programs eventually mean a more passive experience? In what ways will the institute members engage with each other that will create a sense of self-efficacy and empowerment? Will freedom from preparing for teaching a class and exposure to other generations of teachers mean a loss of engagement/empowerment, or will it bring new avenues of creativity and thought? Will engagement and fully democratic participation in planning and delivery of LLI programs even be seen as important? And will these values be viewed differently by future generations?

This is clearly an exciting time for lifelong learning institutes, if not also a critical one. On the one hand, current members worry about the effects of the arrival of the baby boom generation. Will boomers even be interested in the institutes as they currently exist, or will fundamental change take place? On the other hand, the Osher Foundation and a large number of leaders on university campuses are looking at new models and new meanings for lifelong learning as it relates to traditional higher education. A quote attributed to Dorothy Sayers comes to mind: "Time and trouble may tame an advanced young woman, but an advanced old woman [or man] is uncontrollable by any earthly force." Nobody knows where the next years will take the lifelong learning institute movement, but it will no doubt be an interesting ride.

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Lifelong Learning in the Coming Ageless Society: Perspectives on the North American Scene

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During the relatively short time span from the 1970s to the first decade of the new millennium, attitudes toward the elderly in the United States changed dramatically. With almost one-third of persons aged 65 and over found to live below the poverty level in 1960, it is not surprising that narratives about services to and programs for seniors would refer to this population as the “deserving elderly.” Generally, the medically-oriented “failure model” of aging prevailed in both advocacy and academic discourses on aging. The subsequent decades reflect new attitudes that redefined later life as the conditions of the coming generations of senior adults improved. Poverty rates fell, life expectancy lengthened, incomes rose and the safety net of health care insurance (Medicare) and income supports (public and private pension plans) strengthened. Consequently, an upbeat “activity theory” of aging replaced the more melancholy “disengagement theory” first set forth in late 1950s. Seniors were increasingly lauded as “successful,” “productive,” and capable of becoming “spiritual elders.” They were sometimes even portrayed as “privileged” (e.g., “greedy geezers”) during the reactionary period of the late 1970s and early 80s in a small backlash purportedly about “generational equity.”

Correspondingly, the field of gerontology and its collaborators saw a deficit or problem-focused field turn into an assets, strengths, and opportunities one. Researchers and advocates discovered that a large subset of middle-income and more affluent mature adults now comprised a burgeoning “silver industry.” Arrival of the massive Boomer generation to the threshold of retirement has refuted generalizations about an undifferentiated age wave. Instead, increasing interest is focused on diversity factors such as gender, income, health, mental outlook, genetic make up, ethnicity, educational background, and even geographic location. Added to this is the widespread resistance found throughout the middle-aged population to being labeled by age categories. This diffusion and confusion about who is old and what it means to age has made aging a “contested site” and produced an identity crisis that British sociologist Gilleard and Higgs capture in their notion of the multiple “cultures of aging” (Gilleard and Higgs, 2000).

Older adult education in the United States reflects these major shifts in how aging and later life have been understood. It is very possible that the U.S. is moving toward an “ageless society” in which chronological aging and retirement status no longer serve adequately to predict or describe the life styles of vast segments of the mature population. Consequently, educational programs founded on assumptions and attributes linked to earlier paradigms of later life now find themselves caught in a shift whose outcome is less than clear. How existing and new educational organizations adapt to the

transformation of the later part of the life course represents an unwritten chapter in the story of the lifelong learning movement.

The following essay attempts to describe the remarkable emergence of a variety of approaches to lifelong learning in later life in the U.S. as these have been influenced by shift in frameworks for understanding aging and changes in the life course related to work and retirement. At the conclusion, we speculate on where U.S. lifelong learning programs might be headed.

Historical Background

Older adult education in the United States has been shaped more by consumer demand and the rise of a multitude of non-profit educational organization than by state-run institutions or government policies. Fueling the demand is a new generation of retirees who are more affluent, better educated, and healthier than any previous generation in American history. Thirty or forty years ago, only a tiny fractions of the population, the wealthy and healthy, could really enjoy a robust Third Age. Now that leisure time period has become democratized, giving millions of ordinary citizens more options than they had ever dreamed of (Laslett, 1991). And since prior education remains a main determinant of demand for education in the later years (Snyder, Hoffman & Geddes, 1997), this combination of factors has generated a growing population of older learners.

Responding to meet this demand, community-based, non-profit organizations as well as for-profit ones have supplemented more traditional providers such as adult education programs at colleges and universities. Some of the new players that have come upon the U.S. scene in the last 30 years include Elderhostel, a travel-learning program offering to those 50 and over, one or two week-long residencies at educational centers in the U.S. and abroad, and reaching about 300,000 annually; Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs), frequently run by participants who help to develop curricula, teach and govern some 400 programs connected to college and universities, involving about 120,000 annually; a department store-based senior center type program called OASIS (Older Adult Service and Information Systems) Institutes at some 30 shopping center location across the country and serving approximately 350,000 annually; SeniorNet, a senior-user computer network with over 200 centers where courses on computer use are taught by members to members; and Shepherd's Centers, 75 religious organization-sponsored, volunteer run community service and education centers located at churches and synagogues (Manheimer, Snodgrass & Moskow-McKenzie, 1995).

There are 15,000 community-based senior centers supported by local municipalities, usually also receiving some federal and state funds that, in addition to social services and low-cost or free meals, offer a variety of recreational and educational programs. In addition, 1200 community colleges, many that attract older learners to free or low-fee programs, offer subjects ranging from crafts to foreign languages. Publicly funded American colleges and universities in many states offer tuition-free enrollment in regular college classes for those 62 or 65 and over on a space available basis. And added to these, one finds educational programs offered free or for a fee through college and university alumni organization, hospitals, banks, investment companies, museums, labor organizations, recreation centers and via the Internet. There has also been a surge of outdoor education programs ranging from inexpensive hiking and biking clubs to businesses offering deluxe adventure trips to exotic places (Manheimer, 1998).

The proliferation of older learner programs since the mid-1970s reflects major shifts in the population served and the framework (or ideology) within which these programs and their host organizations have developed. Rationales in the early days of older learner programs tended to emphasize the mental and social health benefits of participation. Education helped people to adjust to the "roleless role" of retirement, argued providers. Most programs were free of charge thanks to grants from public agencies. A more entrepreneurial approach as reflected in programs like Elderhostel showed the economic feasibility of low-cost, for-fee programs. Intellectually challenging programs at colleges and universities catered to a new generation of college-educated seniors, many of whom received their higher

education degrees through benefits for military veterans following WW II. These organizations relied on members to volunteer, thus keeping costs low.

Rationales for older learner programs now cover a broad spectrum and wide variety of providers. Some lifelong learning institutes are now concentrating on work and career-related programming designed to help Boomer generation individuals transition to and through retirement into post-retirement careers while helping them with financial planning. Spiritual aging institutes offer training to deepen religious knowledge and prepare people to serve as guides or Elders to younger generations. Legacy leadership programs recruit mainly professionals in midlife and help them become mentors to nonprofit businesses and public agencies. The sheer variety of programs in the first decade of the 21st century reflects how perceptions of aging, later life, and retirement continue to change. Since aging has become a “contested site,” the purposes and goals of older learner programs have become both multiple and ambiguous.

Participation Rates

Most of the organizations described above offer non-formal or non-credit courses, seminars, workshops and learning tours. Most depend on user fees to operate. Others, such as colleges and universities, also offer credit and degree-generating courses, though participation rates remain relatively low for people over 55 or 60. Workplace or workforce-related education and training is offered by many companies and businesses but, as we shall see, the private sector is slow to see the value of enhancing the skills of older workers. The most recent national survey of how and where senior adults participate in continued learning shows the largest growth in non-formal, community-based programs.

According to the National Household Education Surveys (NHES), during the 1990s, the percentage of people in the United States aged 66-74 who took at least one adult education class in the previous year more than doubled -- from 8.4 percent in 1991 to 19.9 percent in 1999. The biggest growth in participation of individuals aged 55-74 was in community-provided, non-formal education. This includes not-for-credit courses, workshops, and seminars offered by churches, libraries, department stores, senior centers and so on where the rate went from 4.6 in 1991 to 11.6 in 1999. This compares to rates of 5.5 percent taking courses in a school or university in 1991 and 8.6 percent in 1999. The increase among the “young-old” surpassed that of any other age group (Hamil-Luker & Uhlenberg, 2002).

Age-related role expectations still seem to be a defining factor for workplace educational participation. Participation rates for job-related education reveal modest increases compared to younger age groups. For example, between 1991 and 1999, the rate of those ages 48-56 participating in educational programs offered by business or industry rose from 12.6 percent to 19.6 percent, while for the age group 66-74, the rate rose from 2.0 to 4.8 percent (Hamil-Luker & Uhlenberg, 2002). This reflects a continuing trend as business and industry prefer to invest their training dollars in the younger workforce.

Degree of prior education remains the chief predictor of educational participation for adults of all ages. But greater visibility of educational opportunities and a growing acceptance of the value of lifelong learning were also factors. In all likelihood this trend will continue as an even better educated American Baby Boom population enters the retirement period and since average age of retirement in the U.S. holds fairly steady at about 63. However, another strong trend, desire to return to the workforce after formal retirement in both full and part time second careers, may alter this pattern (AARP, 1999, 2002). If large numbers of today’s Baby Boomers actually do seek post-retirement careers, there should be a huge increased demand for continuing education.

Unprecedented participation rates of older adult in adult education confirm an overall pattern -- emergence of a so-called “lifelong learning society.” It is estimated that almost half of the entire adult population in the U.S. participates in organized education in a given year (Belanger, 1999; Belanger & Tuijnman, 1997). With regard to older adults, the U.S. is in what might be called a “rehearsal stage.” While the U.S. is certainly an “aging society” with a median age of 36 that will rise the 39 by the year 2010, it is the aging of the huge Baby Boomer population (born between 1946-1964) that will truly challenge cultural and educational institutions. Currently, those 65+ make up 13 percent of the U.S.

population, and those 60+ comprise about 16 percent. The U.S. actually saw little growth in the percentage of its 65+ population during the 1990s because of the low birth rate for the cohort born during the era of the Great Depression of the 30s and into the early part of the 1940s (the so-called “Silent Generation”). But by the year 2020, those 65 and over will comprise 18 percent of the U.S. population, a percentage that will continue to rise until the 2050s (23 percent). The percentage of college educated older adults will rise from the current 12 percent to 20 percent by 2010 and continue to rise dramatically thereafter (Manheimer, 2007). Moreover, this rising percentage applies to a numerically larger cohort.

In the current rehearsal stage, we have seen demand for education growing as education in the later years is viewed as valuable for everything from preparation for second or third careers, personal enrichment and psychological growth, prevention or delay in the onset of cognitive decline, and aiding in adjustment to life beyond or after work. In all likelihood, the demand for educational opportunities will overwhelm current providers in terms of both numbers and range of curricular diversity. People in every industry in the U.S. have been gazing into crystal balls (or hiring consultants, which is almost the same thing) to predict what Baby Boomers will want in their role as consumers. And this is no less true for providers of lifelong learning opportunities. But thinking only in terms of consumers and market studies may be a big mistake. What is called for is new leadership and vision.

Leadership and Vision

Currently, organizational leadership in older adult education is fragmented and decentralized in the U.S. There is no organized group lobbying Congress or state governments for increased funding to educational programs primarily serving older adults. There are a number of national associations with subcommittees or affinity groups focused on older learners. For example, the American Society on Aging has its Lifetime Education and Renewal Network (LEARN) composed of about 350 individuals whose work (usually only in part) is associated with some form of older adult education. And the Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE) has its division of Older Adults. The Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) focuses primarily on professional-level teaching of gerontology and only to a slight extent on education for seniors. A majority of the Lifelong Learning Institutes (LLIs) are members of a consortium, Elderhostel Institute Network (EIN), affiliated with the Elderhostel organization. EIN’s main activities consist of biennial regional conferences, maintenance of an informative web site, and advice on how to start new LLIs. More recently, thanks to the largesse of philanthropist Bernard Osher, the Osher Foundation has provided significant funding to help expand existing LLIs and to support the establishment of some 50 new ones while creating a second network (besides EIN) of some 100 OLLIs. The OLLIs hold an annually national conference.

Professionally speaking, older adult education has no real independent standing. As a field, it is a subject of peripheral concern to both aging and educational organizations. The field lacks monetary significance since it is not a major revenue source for institutions of higher education and only a few non-profit organizations, Elderhostel, perhaps the most significant, derive its main income from offering services and programs to seniors. Education for seniors is seen as an important marketing tool for investment companies, banks, hospitals, and cultural organizations that regard it as a mechanism to lure in potential clients, contributors, and members. In the sphere of higher education, affiliated LLI programs have proven to be a point of access to successfully solicit major donors.

Even in the area of research, where millions of dollars are spent on the causes of and potential remedies for cognitive decline as related to aging, very little research looks at the potential impact of older adult education on sustaining cognitive functioning. And little research involves applying what has been learned in cognitive science to better ways to educate or foster older adult learning. An important exception is the work of Gene Cohen who has conducted some intriguing research on the cognitive health benefits of participation in the arts and on creativity in later life. Cohen’s work (2004) has received widespread, popular attention in the U.S.

Having presented this somewhat negative view, how can one argue that older adult education has a positive future?

Future Directions

The key lies in understanding the larger framework of an aging society and the growing ranks of members of the so-called Third Age. The modern phenomenon of retirement as an expanding segment of the life course has been shaped by private and public sector policies emerging in the middle to late part of the 20th century. For the U.S., these include government social security, private pension plans, public health care insurance, and federal anti-age discrimination laws. Meanwhile, social attitudes towards retirement continue to change. Major national studies show that 75-80 percent of today's Baby Boomers plan to extend their working years (AARP, 1999, 2002) by engaging in post-retirement employment. Current research reveals that saying you're going to work longer and actually doing so are discordant (Pew Research Center, 2006). But this may soon change.

The majority of middle-aged adults regard later life not simply as a period for rest and relaxation but as a time for personal growth through acquiring new skills, exploring new leisure activities and expanding involvement in current ones. Community service among older adults has been rising as seniors view volunteering as both a way to give back to society and as a mechanism for establishing new friendships to offset those lost when exiting the workforce. However, the work of Robert Putnam (2000) has cast doubt on the trend of Baby Boomers maintaining high rates of volunteerism as they age, predicting a serious shortfall in participation of those involved in civic engagement. Efforts have been launched – such as media campaigns – to encourage midlife adults to participate in civic engagement by “sharing their expertise” (Harvard School of Public Health, 2004).

The popular media reflects an upbeat image of the future of aging. Books about getting the most out of the retirement years are flooding bookstores, and articles on new roles for older adults fill the pages of magazines and newspapers. New books are appearing each year on the progressive role older people will play in improving the quality of life in the society. And major popular films keep appearing showing older people as both socially redeemable and redeeming of those of younger generations. In fact, there is so much emphasis on the opportunity that the Third Age presents to the moderately to extremely wealthy and health, that the prospects arise for what some call an “Ageless Society.” This, in part, is the result of a broad segment of the Boomer generation rejecting age labels and attributions. Linking a product, service or organization to words like “senior” or “retirement” may be self-defeating unless these terms take on new connotations.

Nor can one underestimate the anti-aging, stay-young ethos so prevalent in the U.S. where billions of dollars are spent on cosmetic surgery, body treatments and magical elixirs. Critics are probably correct that preoccupation with youthfulness may cloak a denial of the aging process and fear of death. But the quest to extend youthfulness may also involve the desire to stay socially engaged and connected to productive roles that garner social approval and produce self-esteem.

Given the positive respect for education in American society and for the long tradition of education serving as a mechanism for economic advancement, personal growth, and as an indicator of social stature, older adult education should fare well in the coming years. Questions remains: what are the characteristics of future successful programs and will everyone benefit? Here are some predictions.

A rapidly growing pool of competent, college-educated adults is now reaching their retirement years. Even though many will choose to extend their working years, they will also seek out continued learning opportunities of both instrumental (e.g., career enhancement) and expressive (for personal growth). Many of these individuals will be attracted to educational organizations that allow them to play active roles by helping to shape curricula, teach by drawing on both their expertise and life experiences, organize courses, participate in governing the organization, and serve in a multitude of ways that satisfy their desire for a renewed sense of community. They will be prepared to pay sufficient fees and to volunteer their time to make these organizations financially viable.

Those educational organization that can generate an image of creative or productive aging, either by being associated with institutions primarily serving younger generations such as colleges and universities, or by linking to age-neutral organizations such as museums and cultural groups, will attract seniors who seek continued learning but who shun identification with being old, infirm, or needy.

Opportunity to learn together with younger people through formal courses and informal exchange will be attractive to a subset of these older learners who prefer intergenerational and age-integrated experience.

Programs that offer hands-on experiences rather than passive, traditional classroom learning will attract the growing legions of experiential learners ranging from those seeking courses in the arts, environmental sciences, fitness, outdoor study and outdoor adventure.

Flexible scheduling of learning opportunities including evening or weekend programs, and intensive short courses will appeal to those continuing to work full or part time, and to those who want to mix education with myriad other activities such as travel, family involvement, and recreation (gardening, golf, tennis, swimming, skiing, biking and hiking, being among the most popular).

Education via the Internet and through computer user groups (such as SeniorNet) should continue to grow but will supplement, not replace face-to-face learning experiences. Older learners will increasingly expect telecommunications to be utilized in their learning experiences both in and out of the classroom.

Given continued rapid technological changes and a highly unstable and unpredictable global political situation, those educational organizations that can help learners assimilate new knowledge will enjoy increased participation rates.

Again, because older adult education does not fall into one academic discipline but overlaps several and is marginal to all, opportunities to prepare for professional careers in the field are lacking. There is a great need for curricula to help prepare planners, administrators, and educational facilitators of older adults that incorporates the latest research findings on cognitive and emotional development in midlife and old age. The pedagogy of the elderly, sometimes called andragogy or “gerontagogy,” needs to be infused into both adult education degree programs and in social gerontology. Such graduate level programs exist in some European countries but not in the U.S. Ensuring high quality programs remains limited to counting enrollments rather than utilizing professional assessment techniques.

The downside of this optimistic picture of the future of older adult education is that it will leave many behind. Those privileged by earlier college education who can afford user fees and tuition will discover a wealth of opportunities while those with lesser levels of prior formal education, who lack skills for accessing educational programs and/or cannot afford to pay for them, will have few resources to draw on. There have been few signs, even during the economically heady years of American affluence of the 1990s that federal and state governments plan to become major factors in leveling the playing field. The era of government support to bring free or low-cost educational opportunities to working class and underserved people (including minorities) is long past. Unless large advocacy organizations such as AARP start lobbying for an expanded role for lifelong learning that includes older adults, this situation is unlikely to change. The U.S. does not enjoy a long tradition of government-sponsored adult education programs such as is found in the Scandinavian countries.²⁸

Having said this, we believe there will be a change once the teaming millions of retirees begin to express disappointment with their options for filling time in a satisfying and meaningful way. The federal and state government agencies will be hard pressed to come up with solutions. Health care and income supports will no longer be viewed as sufficient government involvement in improving the life quality of senior adults. But this next action step will probably not occur for another ten years.²⁹

The situation of older adult education in the U.S. is clearly the result of the dominant ideology of laissez-faire capitalism in which the market place, not principles of social justice, plays the major role. The positive side of this situation is that it invites a wide range of private and public organizations to

²⁸ For an illuminating discussion on how recent government policies have diminished lifelong learning programs in Sweden, see Rubenson, K. (1995), “Recurrent Education Policies in Sweden: A Moving Target,” in Belanger, P & Gelpi, E. (Eds.), *Lifelong Education*. Dodrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer.

²⁹ An M + R “Civic Engagement Project” has gathered a series of lifelong learning legislative proposals under the name “Experience Wave” for consideration by the 110th Congress of the United States.

develop innovative programs for older learners and compete for their time, energy and money. This ensures a wide diversity of programs, curricula, and delivery formats (e.g. in person, via the Internet) and lets participants “vote with their feet” as far as which programs succeed and which fail. Moreover, the American tradition of voluntary service supports an increasing number of senior adults to take leadership roles in older learner programs. In this sense, older adult education can be highly emancipatory and empowering. Too often government designed and managed educational programs, even innovative ones, become resistant to change and entrenched in bureaucracies that seek to perpetuate themselves. Or funding priorities change and programs disappear over night leaving no template for the future.

The negative side is that recruitment and access to these programs is limited to the well educated, well off, and well connected. Few cultural and educational organizations seem to have made it part of their mission to reach the underserved. When they do, it is usually only episodic and often based on the whims of outside funding sources such as private foundations and government agencies. Perhaps older adults who are themselves leaders and organizers of educational programs will take it upon themselves to develop outreach programs to the underserved.

The demand for continued education in midlife and the later years will grow dramatically over the coming decades. Organizations that seek to meet that demand will need to develop well-thought out plans to ensure long term growth and stability. Most will have to be financially self-sustaining, meaning they will need to charge high enough fees and/or recruit enough volunteer leadership to cover the cost of offering a diverse curriculum and occupying large enough facilities for future growth. In many ways, they will have to follow a business model. They will need to tap into the wealth and expertise of their clientele and help create learning communities in which participants play active roles as both learners and decision makers. When older adult education becomes a large enough business, it will generate sufficient funds to afford more professionally trained administrative staff and to establish training programs for facilitators of older adult education. Eventually, the concept of lifelong learning will embrace a continuum of learners from youth to old age, and the idea of lifelong education will become an accepted part of American society. This development may require age-segregated, age-qualified lifelong learning programs to either change missions or fade into the sunset.

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Association for Continuing Higher Education (ACHE) -- www.acheinc.org

Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) -- www.aghe.org

Association of Learning in Retirement Organization of the West (ALIROW) -- www.alirow.org

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) -- www.aaace.org

American Society on Aging, Lifetime Education and Renewal Network (LEARN) -- www.asaging.org/learn

Council of Adult and Experiential Education -- www.cael.org

Elderhostel Institute Network -- eh.elderhostel.org/ein

Older Adult Services and Information Systems (OASIS) Institutes -- www.oasisnet.org

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute Resource Center -- www.usm.maine.edu/olli/national/

SeniorNet -- www.seniornet.org Shepherd's Centers -- www.shepherdcenters.org

SPRY Foundation -- www.spry.org

University Continuing Education Association (UCEA) -- www.ucea.edu

Computer Games & Older Adults Why???

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There has been a tremendous development of computer games since they first appeared in the sixties. Since the invention of computer games many young people have engaged with this form of entertainment as part of their growing up. Many baby boomers may remember the first computer game been released or even playing it, but what about now in the 21st Century? Would the over-fifties consider playing games with their children/grandchildren using the latest technology available? Playing and Interacting with this form of entertainment for people of all ages is a learning curve, learning in the sense of what buttons to press, the nature of the game itself and what is expected of the player when playing the game.

The baby boomer generation has been part of and experienced many exciting developments, in recent years and decades such as the invention of youth culture and the reinvention of middle age, since this generation was born during the two decades after World War Two. The year 2006 has seen the first of this generation turn 60 years old. Workshops conducted to gain both qualitative and quantitative data revealed interesting results from participants who were both gamers and non-gamers. The method used to collect data was in the form of workshops, consisting of a survey which gauged computer use, confidence of using a computer, computer game usage, confidence of computer games and personal details. Four presentations and four worksheets were used as part of the workshop, where each presentation and worksheet corresponded with each other. Participants in the workshop were given a step-by-step approach into designing their own game idea, relating to a hobby, interest or dream. Of the participants 25% had taught themselves to play computer games shortly followed by 17% learning from a grand-child. Twenty-nine percent of players preferred playing puzzle games, shortly followed by 21% enjoying strategy.

Project funded by CODEWORKS, Newcastle, UK

Hannah Marston started in January 2005 as a research assistant at the in the School of Computing where she investigated older adults and computer games. She started studying for an MPhil/PhD in January 2005 exploring the area of computer games, demographics and computer games.

Computer Games & Older Adults Why???

Introduction:

Baby boomers are a population of people who have been part of many phenomenon's, since this generation were born during the two decades after the war the invention of youth culture and the reinvention of middle age. 2006 will see the generation start to turn 60. With the technology enhancements that have occurred during the late 20th Century some of the baby boomers will have become familiar with and others not as familiar through employment, social network and family life. Computer games have come a long way since they were first developed in the sixties. The knowledge and skills that have derived over the years have seen many young people taking this form of entertainment as part of their growing up. Many baby boomers may remember the first computer game been released or even playing it, but what about now in the 21st Century?

Over the last forty years there have been many developments and implementations that have brought computer games to where they are today. Computer games companies have developed games for the younger audience rather than older adults and seniors.

There has been a number of articles in recent years reporting on older adults and computer gaming. One particular article reported on the BBC web site “Pensioners catch the gaming bug” stating: “Increasing numbers of over 60s are picking up joysticks to play videogames.” A games company based in the Midlands called CODEMASTERS, has nicknamed this particular audience “grey gamers,” which has seen an increase in people over sixty “buying the more diverse games such as strategy and historical titles.” The report also discusses “the type of games that get grannies and grandpas going are the ones that require lateral thinking and problem solving rather than shoot em ups.” (*Pensioners Catch the Gaming Bug, BBC News, 03 December 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/technology/3287891.stm>*)

Since the Nintendo DS was released in 2005 one of the best selling games which have been developed for the handheld has been Dr Kawashima’s Brain Training game. The game itself involves a number of “brain-enhancing exercises” (*Bennallack, 2006*) allowing gamers and non-gamers to play “a variety of mini-games designed to give brains a workout.” (*Bennallack, 2006*) The type of mini games implemented range from “solving simple maths problems, counting people going in and out of a house, drawing pictures on the Nintendo DS touch screen, and reading classic literature aloud into the device’s microphone.” (*Bennallack, 2006*) Gamers are able to see how their brain is performing and improving with time as they are given a brain age reflected from their performances through the games, the better scores you gain the younger your brain should get. The game itself has “sold some 1.8 million copies and it is still in the Japanese top 10 a year after release” (*Bennallack, 2006*)

The Wii, which was released 8th December 2006 is another Nintendo success story. The Wii allows players to actively interact with games rather than just push buttons. Introducing motion sensors to gamers and a console allow everyone to interact with the technology even more so older adults and the elderly who may find pressing buttons awkward. An example of this is the golf game, “the device becomes the club and the force of a drive is determined by how far back you swing the controller.” (*Hermida, 2006*)

Previous Research:

A small study was carried out in the Netherlands (*Copier, 2002*) which focused on elderly people playing computer games. The main research outlined in the project investigated the following: what kind of digital games do they play, what motivates the elderly to play digital games and does the playing of digital games lead to a wider social network? This study interviewed twelve people ranging from 50-76 years old.

From the investigation the study reported that “the elderly play games out of every game-genre: action, adventure, fighting, puzzle, role-playing, simulations, sports and strategy (Herz, 1997). But most of them played cards, chess, puzzle and adventure games.” One of the main conclusions from the study was the only people who the elderly speak to about games was other family members, who in turn provided them with new games.

A similar investigation to that was carried out in the Netherlands was conducted by the University of Abertay, Dundee, Scotland, called the UTOPIA project. The aim of the project was to assess and determine older adults and user interfaces in relation to computer games. The article itself has some interesting points but there are also areas within the project where it raises a number of questions, for example how did the computer games used be chosen?, what further

research has been conducted to gain further qualitative and quantitative data off the back of this project?

Why should older adults and seniors learn to play computer games?

Keeping the mind and brain active throughout life is imperative to the human mind allowing the individual to learn, enhance skills and knowledge and to interact with others. A younger person learning to play computer games can be fairly easy to understand and pick up either from family members or friends. When learning to play young people may find this easy to do by watching what happens on the screen and the hand movements conducted on the console pad. For an older adult to learn how to play could be more taxing especially when not use to this new form of entertainment and as technology is enhancing hardware may become fiddly to comprehend and to use which an older adult may find more difficult to learn and operate.

A report in the Journal Active Aging September/October 2002 reports; “As adults live longer and have more experiences, their brains has more information to sort through to retrieve those memories. The activities someone has done for a lifetime have established connections in the brain, making them easier to recall. But people need to use newer information frequently to form that direct connection to memory. Keeping the brain agile in its ability to find and use information will help reduce the memory loss associated with aging.” (*Chapmen, 2002*) to combat memory loss associated with aging and enhance mental stimulation the report details the strategies to overcome this; “learn new things, read books and periodicals and do word games.” (*Chapmen, 2002*)

Method:

The method developed for this investigation included a survey to be completed by respondents themselves. The following topics were included: computer use and ownership; computer game play, ownership of computer game equipment and related issues; as well as demographic details. Confidence has been found to be a pivotal factor in computer use in older adults (Barbeite & Weiss, 2004). A recently developed instrument, the (new) Computer Self-Efficacy scale (CSE) (Barbeite & Weiss), was included in the survey to measure computer confidence. Based on the CSE scale, the Computer Game Confidence scale was developed. Each item used a 7-point response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Two versions of each scale were included in the questionnaire: the CSE for computer users and non-users, and the Computer Game Confidence scale for computer game players and non-players. The method also included a series of workshops.

Participants are talked through four presentations. The first presentations discuss aspects of computer games such as context, communication, game play, imbalances and verbs. The final presentation asks participants to write down where their computer game could be advertised and how much the game should cost, as well as other target audiences. As part of the final presentation participants are asked to outline their game idea using the information from the previous presentations. For each presentation participants were handed a corresponding worksheet allowing a step-by-step approach. Not all participants who wanted to take part in the investigation were able to attend a workshop. It was decided that participants who were unable to attend a workshop but still interested in taking part in the project could still complete the survey.

In the workshops participants were asked a series of questions relating to hobbies, interests, dreams and what are their most important times. The rationale behind these questions was to discover whether participants wanted computer games designed and developed relating to their hobbies, interests and dreams. The initial results indicated that a number of participants enjoyed gardening, walking, sewing, sport, reading, photography, music and puzzles. The majority of participant’s dreams were to travel, learn a language and to take part in adult education. Their

most important times were spent with grandchildren, husband or wife, family members and at weekends.

As part of the survey handed out in the workshops, participants who had been playing computer games how they had learnt to play. There were a number of options for the participant to choose from these were; learned from a grand-child, learned from a child, learned from other family member, learned from a friend, taught myself, taught in class or other. There was no stipulation to the participant(s) as to how many in this section they could tick. In some of the cases the participants could have answered more than once. For participants who did not already play computer games they were asked whether they would consider playing a computer game, a further question which followed a negative response to this was "If not, why not?"

Participants who were not game players and who had not answered previous section of the survey relating to type of game genre(s) played were asked to specify the type of game genre they would consider playing; this included shooter, platform, sports, puzzle, adventure, strategy and other. Participants were not constricted to ticking one option; therefore participants may have answered more than one question. The next question that participants were asked relating to learning was "would you be willing to learn how to play computer games?" Participants were required to answer yes, no or don't know. The final question in this particular section asked participants whether they "consider playing a computer game related to their hobby?" Participants were required to answer yes, no or don't know.

Results:

The full sample of participants overall aged fifty and over was twenty-eight. Five of those participants had not been able to take part in the workshops and therefore had just filled in a survey. The gender split between the participants was sixteen women and twelve men. When participants were asked from the survey how they had learnt how to play computer games five had responded with the answer learned from a grandchild, two from a child, ten had taught themselves, one from a friend, one had reported other means of learning (not reported from participant) and nine had reported to do not play. Participants were asked whether they had access to a games consoles, eight had reported yes, nineteen had reported no and one had reported don't know. Participants were asked whether they owned a computer for playing computer games. Twenty reported yes, seven reported no and one reported don't know. When asked what type of computer they owned for playing games fifteen reported owning a PC, two reported owning a Macintosh, five answered not sure and six reported of not owning a computer. Participants were then asked whether they had access to a computer to play games, twenty-one had reported yes to have access to a computer, six reported no and one reported don't know.

The twenty-eight participants were then asked whether they had played games on the Internet. Six reported yes to playing games on the Internet and twenty-two had reported no. Participants were asked whether they would be willing to learn how to play computer games? Nineteen reported yes they would, five reported no and four reported don't know. Of those participants who were classed as gamers they were asked what type of genre they enjoyed playing. Three ticked shooter, two platform, two sport, nine puzzle, six adventure, seven strategy and six other. Participants may have answered more than once to the game genres. Of those who are not gamers, they were asked as to what type of genre they would consider playing? Four answered yes to shooter, one to platform, eight to sports, thirteen to puzzle, eight to adventure, ten to strategy and two to other. As the same with gamers, non-gamers may have ticked more than once.

Conclusions:

This paper has discussed a number of issues relating to older adults, computer games, new technology and learning. The areas discussed have included why older adults should learn to play computer games in relation to mental stimulation, playing games allows the gamer to keep their brain active, learn a new form of entertainment and technology as well as enhancing skills and knowledge if playing games on the PC or Internet, enhancing techniques already learnt from using the computer for word processing or communicating with friends and family. From the results of the workshops conducted the response to learning how to play computer games and the type of genre(s) considered playing by non-gamers was positive, giving a wide variety of genres that would be considered playing. Prior knowledge of computer games was not required by participants for the workshops and having little knowledge gave the participants the chance to understand where what was required.

Having no knowledge allowed participants to be free with their ideas. Gamers who had been playing games all their life or just for a short period also gave positive responses to the survey and workshops as much as the non-gamers. Game technology has been discussed and one thing to think about is; is it the game content or the type of technology that older players want? Looking at the effect of the Wii has had on this audience maybe it is the type of technology interaction that is required to entice more players into playing and learning how to play computer games. With the technology that the Wii has brought to the market allowing older adults to immerse themselves in a game with friends and family maybe the future for games and having not only other demographic groups but also easier on learning in the sense playing golf or tennis it is easier to understand what is expected of them as a player when using the device of the Wii as you would a racket or golf club. What does the future hold in respect to further research? It is intended to look further into the notion that the type of technology used in a variety of game consoles is more important than the game content and genre used to entice and aide older people into playing and learning computer games.

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ADULT EDUCATION: PROVISION AND POSITION IN EDINBURGH

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(Paper by Nancy Somerville and John Young)
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This paper will look at the high uptake by older adults of adult education opportunities offered by the City of Edinburgh Council. It will suggest that the wide range of provision - including astronomy, bird-watching, computing, creative writing, Scottish women's history, Spanish language, traditional music and yoga - is attractive to older learners and reflects the diversity of their needs and interests.

Almost a third of Edinburgh's population of just under 450, 000 are aged 50 and over. Statistically, adults aged 60+ in Edinburgh are more likely to attend adult education classes than those aged 40 – 60, who in turn are more likely to attend than those under 40.

Adult Education within the City of Edinburgh Council offers arguably the widest range of provision in Scotland per head of population, and manages to survive thanks to a dedicated staff team who believe passionately in the value of non-formal adult education, despite being part of a 'Children and Families Department' which focuses primarily on children's educational and welfare provision, and in a national policy context which places adult education within 'Housing and Regeneration.'

This workshop will also look at the role of learner participation, focusing on the work of ALFiE (the Adult Learners' Forum in Edinburgh), a learner-led voluntary organisation supported by the council, which aims to give adult learners a say in adult education policy and decision-making at a local, city-wide and national level.

Adult educators working for the City of Edinburgh Council supporting the Adult Learners' Forum in Edinburgh (ALFiE) and promoting educational activities for older learners. Jane is Principal CLD Officer with the Children and Families Department and has worked in Community Education for 30 years in youth work, community centre management and Community Education team management

Context

Edinburgh has a wealth of adult education opportunities available to older people, offered by voluntary organisations such as the WEA (Workers' Educational Association), Further and Higher Education establishments, for example Queen Margaret University's COPA (Centre for the Older Person's agenda), and the University of Edinburgh's 'Office of Lifelong Learning' programme.

The city's joint plan for older people, 'A City for All Ages', views the significant proportion of older people in the city as an asset and aims to recognise, promote and build on the essential contribution they make as citizens to Edinburgh. The plan was developed in 1999 by a multi-agency group which includes various departments of the council, NHS Lothian, the voluntary sector and older people themselves. (The group produces an annual brochure for older people, "Get Up And Go", which provides details of a range of services, e.g. health, transport, community activities, sport and fitness, the arts and learning opportunities.) The plan, which "re-affirms and updates the priorities that have been agreed by agencies, and older people in the city for the period to 2010", is currently under review - pending examination of the Scottish Executive document, 'Age and Experience' published in March 2007 - and is likely to build on the range of

areas it already covers, such as citizenship, intergenerational wellbeing, equality and diversity, housing and support, transport and mobility, and lifelong learning.

With regard to lifelong learning, the revised City for All Ages' draft objectives includes:

- The Council through Children and Families will work with local and community organisations to offer varied and learning and training opportunities focussed on the needs of their local areas. This will include opportunities for older people to interact with younger people in schools and youth work, and for those who are housebound and living in care homes.
- Businesses through the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce will consider what they can do to develop the skills of their employees throughout their working life; and then help them to manage a successful transition to a positive and fulfilling retirement, with special stress on offering opportunities for flexible employment and skills development towards the end of careers.
- Voluntary organisations through EVOC (Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council) will seek to develop the skills of older people; and help older people contribute to the learning of others.

City of Edinburgh Council - adult education provision

Adult education is commonly split into the following categories:

- Formal education – courses associated with assessment and accreditation, e.g. SQA courses
- Non-formal education – structured and purposeful but not formally assessed, e.g. most community-based educational groups and evening classes
- Informal education – unstructured, incidental learning, e.g. reading or watching television.

(Coombs, Prosser and Ahmed, 1973)

Most City of Edinburgh Council adult education provision comes under the heading of non-formal education.

The range includes:

- Free community-based classes and groups
- Free literacy and numeracy classes
- Free Family Learning groups and courses for parents, grandparents and other carers
- Free large-scale, participatory public seminars exploring topical issues held in Edinburgh City Chambers, run by Edinburgh's Active Citizenship group, a multi-agency group led by council staff. www.egfl.net/activecitizenship
- Programmes of adult education classes, charged at a fee, run by eight community high schools. There are approximately 13,000 enrolments each year.
- A centrally-organised Advertised Adult Education Programme of day, evening and weekend classes, charged at a fee. There are approximately 12,000 enrolments each year. (This programme will be covered in more detail below.)

In common with local authority staff across the country, the City of Edinburgh Council's Community Learning and Development Workers support a range of voluntary groups, and council-run groups which meet in council community centres. Many of them include older people

or are targeted and tailored specifically for them, and include activities like, dancing, fitness, writers groups, literacy and numeracy and computing.

Community-based provision in Edinburgh includes the Adult Learning Project (ALP). Internationally recognised as a model of good practice in adult education, ALP for 28 years has adapted the theories and methods of Brazilian adult educator Paulo Freire to its setting in urban Edinburgh. The Welcoming, a voluntary organisation for refugees and asylum seekers to learn alongside the host community, was developed by ALP and continues to be supported by the project and its learners. An Open University book about ALP's work is being translated into Spanish and Valenciano and will be featured at two international conferences this year.

A group of retired people attending music classes at ALP formed 'Auld Spice', a ceilidh & function band which regularly plays at ceilidhs, community events, senior citizen clubs, day centres, schools and, recently, played for 7000 walkers on the Great Scottish Walk. www.auldspice.com

One of ALP's groups for older women, 'Damn Rebel Bitches' studies Scottish women's history and recently presented an exhibition of Women in War to primary school children. (The group's name, 'Damn Rebel Bitches', defiantly celebrates the derogatory term used to describe female Jacobites by a male Hanoverian contemporary.)

To support work such as this, and to "bring agencies for older and younger people together for a mutually beneficial, social or educational experience", the council set up an 'Intergenerational Grant Fund.' Activities funded include a DVD illustrating what life is and was like for older and younger people in an area to the north of the city and visual art, photography and film projects bringing people of varying ages and cultures together.

Advertised Adult Education Programme

The City of Edinburgh Council provides a wide range of adult education classes which are run in schools, community centres and a variety of other venues, e.g. museums and art galleries. Over 30,000 adult learners take up these opportunities, of which 33% are over 60 years of age.

(a) Programmes of adult education classes, charged at a fee, run by eight of the city's community high schools, providing both day and evening classes. Together, the eight schools have about 13,000 enrolments per year. There is a system of concessionary rates.

(b) A centrally organised advertised adult education programme of day, evening and weekend classes, charged at a fee. There are approximately 12,000 enrolments each year. There is a system of concessionary rates.

These programmes can trace their origins back to the old night schools, and in the main, their ethos is still largely educational rather than recreational or social. The desire to learn, to develop skills and broaden the outlook applies to all students of whatever age enrolling for these classes, and statistics on enrolments indicate that just under one third of those attending classes are retired, while the number of enrolments in the 50+ age groups is about half the total of enrolments.

The great variety of classes put on by the centrally advertised programme together with the eight community schools, over a hundred subjects, many at different levels, is clearly as attractive to older learners as it is to younger ones – the appeal of motor cycle maintenance, wine appreciation and astronomy spans generations. A limited number of "academic" subjects are put on by the centrally organised team in partnership with local colleges. The sheer range of topics offered by the eight schools and the city wide provision ensures universal appeal, and invites participants

from all sectors of society and all age groups. Social inclusion is a stated objective of the Adult Education Programme, e.g. through the use of accessible venues, sign language interpreters, support workers where required and regular tutor training.

It is probably fair to say that the relationship between the community schools towards each other, and of each towards the centrally organised programme, is that of loose co-operation and loose rivalry. There is no formal consultation among the parties to orchestrate a strategy for the city, as each of the community schools looks primarily to the needs of learners in their local area. There is however a sense of working together where it is mutually beneficial in that meetings will occasionally be held to discuss curricular matters or legal requirements such as health and safety or disability issues. Many tutors are employed both by a community school and the centrally organised programme, and information regarding tutors is shared by the different providers.

A key feature of the centrally organised Adult Education Programme (AEP) is that it has a rigorous approach to quality assurance through monitoring and evaluation. Classroom observations are used to assess quality and also provide feedback to tutors. An annual student survey is carried out to gather learners' views about the programme. The results are fed into the policy and planning process for the following year's programme.

The charging of fees, while not always welcomed by the payers, is a very useful lever in the exercise of student power within the AEP. In this age of consumerism, there is an increasing tendency among course participants to make their opinions on all aspects of the programme felt. While the programme is organised centrally by a team of staff, course survival stands or falls on the numbers enrolled: if an advertised course does not make its minimum number of applicants, it is cancelled. Effectively, those courses which survive are necessarily those which are popular. While the programme would appear to be imposed, the final determiner of its survival is in the hands of course participants. In a very real sense, students are empowered.

ALFiE (Adult Learners' Forum in Edinburgh)

The AEP, together with much of the other adult education provision in Edinburgh works with ALFiE, a voluntary organisation with charitable status which aims to ensure that adult learners have a voice in policy and decision-making at a city-wide and national level. It is led by a voluntary committee of adult learners, most of whom are retired, and who are actively involved in a variety of learning opportunities across the city.

Since its formation in 1998 ALFiE has made progress in three main areas:

1. *Representation.* To give adult learners a voice and involve them directly in policy and decision making at a local, city-wide and national level.
2. *Information.* To gather information from learners and disseminate information to them.
3. *Networking.* To provide opportunities for learners to network with each other, with adult learning providers and with policy makers.

ALFiE's activities include, holding seminars exploring issues of importance to adult learners, providing research reports and newsletters, publishing and disseminating a Bill of Rights for Learners and a Manifesto for Adult Education. ALFiE regularly carries out research into issues of importance to adult learners. Recently, with funding from the Lotteries Community Fund 'Awards for All', ALFiE commissioned research into learner/user consultation and involvement in adult education provision in Edinburgh. The report is available on the ALFiE website: www.alfieforum.edin.org ALFiE's concerns about adult education in Edinburgh led to the recent formation of the Edinburgh Adult Education Group, a "Voluntary Sector / City of Edinburgh Council partnership of learners and adult educators working together to

improve the quality, range and status of learner-centred adult education in the City of Edinburgh”. ALFiE currently operates through the commitment of its volunteers with some in-kind support from the Council's Children & Families Department and the University of Edinburgh's Moray House School of Education, but it has no paid staff and no office base.

Adult Education in Edinburgh: the future

How will the City of Edinburgh Council's Adult Education Programme meet the aspirational interests of older people in the future? Annual student survey statistics suggest a high degree of satisfaction on the part of participants, particularly with regard to tutor commitment and value for money. There has however been a falling off of enrolments over the last three years, particularly among payers of the standard fee but less so among older learners. The reduction in the number of standard fee payers, the largest contributors to the total budget, might be attributed to a rise in course fees of 50% over the last five years. If the trend continues it will certainly affect the financial viability of the programme, and threaten its existence as inclusive educational provision.

Other key issues affecting the future of the AEP are the national and local government agendas for education and young people and its focus on formal education, employability and economic sustainability. It is now generally held among educators that Labour has abandoned “its vision for lifelong and life-wide learning for all. In its place we have a narrow utilitarianism, with government support available to employers and to people who want the qualifications the government wants them to want.” (Tucket 2007)

Current policy does not take account of the way people learn, how they learn, where they learn and when they learn. More consideration must be given to the changes in demography and in particular how this affects older people's lives many of whom will have to work for longer.

McClusky suggests that older adults have five types of needs which educational provision can meet:

1. Coping needs – having basic levels of skills, fitness and income
2. Expressive needs – taking part in activities for enjoyment or to pursue interests
3. Contributive needs – helping others, contributing to society
4. Influence needs – making a difference, acting for social change
5. Transcendence needs – reaching a deeper understanding of life

Hiemstra, R. (1981, 2002)

Findsen states that, “most mainstream providers of learning opportunities tend to focus on the *coping* and *expressive* needs of older citizens.” We believe that City of Edinburgh Council provision together with ALFiE offers opportunities to address to some extent all five categories. (Findsen 2004)

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SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING OLDER ADULTS

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Abstract

The presentation will propose a global context commencing with five discernible approaches to third age learning across the world. The main thrust of the presentation will be the United Kingdom approach as exemplified in the Universities of the Third Age. Current numbers of those involved in this radical experiment in education will be recorded and two notable projects analysing the response of participants to the 'self help model' will be cited. Examples of learning approaches, methodology and best practice within UK U3As will reveal the unique character of their programmes. Parallel developments will be acknowledged and the paper will also explore some of the problems the Third Age Trust has encountered in developing its work. These include issues to do with the preparation and development of those co-ordinating interest groups, as well as resistance to the concept of 'teaching each other', the difficulty of subject areas which seem to depend on chronological progression through a syllabus and the much misunderstood but vital connection between 'socialising' and 'learning'.

The paper will go on to explore the significance of the Trust's relations with other agencies of lifelong learning (e.g. the Open University) and the benefits participants are experiencing in working with major national institutions (e.g. British Museum, Royal Opera House) in the Shared Learning Projects. Regional meetings, Study Days and the residential Summer Schools will also be cited for their contribution to the national nature of U3A membership and mention will also be made of the importance of the international movement as a means of widening the learning experience. This return to the opening themes of the paper will introduce a concluding section which will adumbrate a future for the Trust and its member U3As through the application of new technologies. Both On Line Learning and the setting up of a Virtual U3A will be referred to in this context. Finally, the paper will raise the question of the contribution made to community life through the dynamic experiential learning activity of individual members of UK U3As

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Older learning has spread worldwide and for ever-increasing numbers. Whatever the differences of organisation, location or methods, opportunities for older learners have grown not just in line with demographic trends but also in response to the needs of an increasingly sophisticated and demanding audience and to the pioneering activities of enlightened educators in numerous countries. Examples of older learning activities can be found in such diverse areas as Siberia, Chile, China, Australia and the Americas, not to mention Scandinavia and the whole of Europe. Within this global context, there are at least five different models of third age provision, which itself is based on the concept of learning as a continuum throughout the stages of life. The third age or stage is one based not on a given numerical age but on that condition of life where the pressures of family and work responsibilities have begun to lessen, if not largely disappear. These

are the “older learners” that this paper will consider and whose interests and demands have particular relevance for those involved in the design and delivery of teaching programmes.

Jean-Louis Levesque, the immediate past President of AIUTA (the International Association of Universities of the Third Age), has written of 5 models of Universities of the Third Age, a title that embraces institutions bearing other names but dedicated to the same ideal of providing non-award bearing, open learning provision for those in the third age of life.

These models include:

- the west European or ‘Vellas’ model originated by the late Professor Pierre Vellas of the University of Toulouse, France;
- the Anglo-Saxon model as practised particularly in the United Kingdom and in various forms in other English-speaking countries;
- the North American French-speaking model;
- the South American model;
- the Chinese model.

Within these broad categories, with their local variations, are programmes ranging in their design and delivery from top-down to bottom-up; from university delivered courses underwritten with guarantees of academic excellence through to participative learning activities, whose quality is assessed in terms of the effect the learners perceive them to have and the value they place on them.

In over 30 countries such learning opportunities are being taken up by literally millions of older learners. Among AIUTA’s members are to be found individual U3As, as they are often known, as well as national or local federations of groups of U3As. Thus the UNITRE federation in Italy incorporates over a 100 individual U3As including outposts in Switzerland and in Argentina. In China there are literally thousands of U3As and in France many universities host institutes of various names, each dedicated to the provision of third age learning, combined in some cases with inter-generational activities.

Universities of the Third Age in the United Kingdom have developed during the past 25 years on a model which reflects both the British psyche and the country’s educational and cultural context. For many of the current 180,000 individual members of the 620 U3As of the Third Age Trust, the national federation, the term “University” is only accepted when abbreviated, such is the negative connotation of that word. The intellectual prestige and recognition that a university based course offers may be respected but often among many of those now in their 70s in the UK poor early experiences of education initially deter them from wishing to partake in anything too overtly intellectual. The Anglo-Saxon model of U3A, which is the centre-piece of this paper, has resolved this problem by adopting a radical approach to its provision, an approach which has the learner as the central point of planning and delivery in courses and activities which are largely participative and in which, in the words of one of the founding fathers of the UK U3A movement, Peter Laslett, “*Those who teach, also learn; those who learn, also teach*”. Eric Midwinter, in his book “*500 Beacons*” traces the various influences which produced the British model of U3A. These include the unique chemistry of demographic, social science and educational thinking arising from the interaction between Michael Young, Peter Laslett and himself at a time in 1970s and early 80s when “*a complex web of political, social and other strands*” went into the making of the British version of the University of the Third Age. Not least among these strands was the influence of the Vellas model in France where University extral-mural work had been far less well developed than in the UK.

Third Age Trust surveys of U3A members' experiences and appreciation of this pattern of learning reveal something of the nature, strengths and weaknesses of this approach. Whatever else they reveal, it is clear that this form of lifelong education is innovative and unlike other more formal types of adult education available in the UK. What then are its characteristics?

At the heart of the typical British U3A is the 'subject' or 'interest' group. Each U3A, a self-funded, democratic, locally based organisation of 'third-agers' will have a number of such groups providing on a regular basis a series of meetings very often facilitated by a member who is a volunteer group leader. In addition to these subject or interest groups, there is likely to be a monthly meeting for the whole U3A with a specialist speaker, either from within the U3A or brought in from outside.

During the period between 2001 and 2004, the Third Age Trust undertook a number of studies aimed at investigating the nature of its membership, their U3A activities, organisational patterns and methods of learning. This material was derived from anonymous responses to questionnaires sent out to a random sample of U3A members throughout the UK. Although the vast majority (approximately 90% of the sample) had previously worked in technical, administrative, managerial or professional posts, just over half of them had already completed their full-time education by the age of 16 and 23% had no further qualification beyond that age. Well over 100 different activities were listed by U3A, of which the most popular included walking, music, art, foreign languages, book circles, bridge, needlecraft, various forms of historical study, writing, discussion groups, genealogy and science. Only a quarter of the U3As had a member designated as the Study Group Co-ordinator whose role is to provide a measure of support for those volunteering to lead groups, although two-thirds have an agreed policy with regard to the encouragement of existing group leaders or the recruitment of new ones. It is perhaps significant in this context that almost one in five group leaders lead more than one group. A significant majority (two-thirds) of study or interest groups have 15 members or fewer and nearly half of all groups meet on a monthly basis with others weekly or fortnightly. Over half (53%) of all groups engage in either fully shared learning or part shared learning which are defined in the following manner:

Fully shared learning – planning and learning activities shared amongst the members of a group with a group co-ordinator;

Part shared learning – planned and guided by a group leader with members of the group responsible for making contributions.

There is a strong preference (81%) for shared learning over instructional learning. A clear majority thought the pace and level of learning was "about right" including the fifth of those questioned who were pursuing a subject new to them. The most common factor in their choice of study or interest group was the convenience of day and time. The age profile of these learners showed that 35% were in their sixties, 45% in their seventies and 15% in their eighties with the remainder under sixty. The group leaders reflected a similar pattern with a third in their sixties and a half in their seventies.

A separate study undertaken in U3A in the North-East of England in 2004 (*Lessons for a Changing Society, O'Keefe, Atkinson and Pinkerton; University of Sunderland*) reinforces the view emerging from the Third Age Trust surveys that shared learning is the preferred approach for U3A members. In response to the question 'What works about the U3A?' responses included 'mutual cooperation', 'helping each other', 'mutual help', 'the willingness of many members to share their experience and knowledge', 'working as a team' and a fuller statement 'The U3A embodies the community education principles of respecting everyone's knowledge and experience, and the recognition that everyone has something to teach as well as to learn, is

invaluable and I wouldn't want that to change.' It is unsurprising that this view of successful learning should be so firmly held by members of U3A. Professor David James in a conference address in 2003 made the point that “... *in general terms, initial learning tends to be externally controlled by teachers and parents, while later learning tends to be self-controlled and directed*”. All of which raises the question of whether the current topic is correctly titled as “Successful strategies for TEACHING older learners” or should be more appropriately entitled “Successful strategies for LEARNING by older learners”?

In a paper written in early 2004 by the then vice-chairman of the Third Age Trust, Ivor Manley, set out for the benefit of international readers the UK U3A approach to Lifelong Learning. Having traced the background of the movement in the UK and described its self-help philosophy, Manley moved rapidly through the questions of accreditation (or rather absence of accreditation) of learning and funding before addressing the issues of the practice of self-help learning and the support available for those involved in it. He quotes Dr.T.S.Chivers, a retired university sociologist and founding member of a U3A:

“The distinctive quality of U3A learning is that it provides (i) a very informal means of acquisition, (ii) a de-emphasised distance between teacher and participant, (iii) an easy means of movement from one role to another (e.g. participant to convenor or vice versa), (iv) an experiential form in many of the groups, which could lead to reflection and transformation, (v) a sociable environment, and (vi) a current programme of wholly unassessed study. At the same time, U3A offered forms of learning widely available in educational institutions as a whole; skills, continued learning in a range of subjects, and interactive learning situations.”

A summary of the study of self-help learning from which this quotation is taken forms one of 3 annexes to Ivor Manley's paper. Another annexe contains written descriptions of typical U3A learning activities and these provide striking illustrations of the power and impact of this approach to learning in which the use of the pronoun “we” with regard to decisions and activities in U3A learning groups has more resonance than just that of a grammatical device.

“We have had a Latin group since about 1989.....A Welsh study group also operated for a couple of years. My own interest in etymology resulted in my being invited to give a talk on “A thousand centuries of language”.....and I was asked about the possibility of starting a study group. This has now run for six years...”

“We practised Italian by making a narrative for performance. We chose a period of Italian life that involved many British people and about which little is known, 1943-45.”

“We started an Italian group three years ago. I was dubious about the results, since I had no training as a teacher.....Three years later my Italian has improved considerably, and my fellow students seem to have come to no harm either.”

In a music Study Group *“we have regular members' choice sessions but rather than just giving sentimental or personal reasons for a choice, members are asked 'to justify their selection in terms of inherent musical interest and significance'. It is surprising how much such a requirement develops one's musical insight and listening skills!”*

“Reading the World... This group has worked for six years and is continuing...A syllabus is decided annually ...in itself a product of meetings of the group deciding an overall theme and allotting research and presentation duties to individuals.”

“When I first joined the Social History Group over 8 years ago, my enthusiasm for the subject soon led me to being asked to become its secretary (which in this group also meant chairman of

the meeting).....To someone who had previously been an engineer it was a totally new scene for me and at times somewhat daunting, but my many new friends contributed much from their own studies so that together we learnt ...”.

“Although I lead the group, we are very much a learning cooperative.”

“It is in the best spirit of the U3A movement that one both gives and receives, ultimately it is also the most fulfilling.”

While the success of the Universities of the Third Age in the UK is now well attested, I would not wish to underestimate some of the problems which they and the Third Age Trust acknowledge. One is inherent in that sentence - 'they and the Third Age Trust'. The six hundred or so U3As value their 'autonomy' although the term the Trust prefers is 'operational independence' for groups which adhere to the basic principles of the movement and yet organise their own affairs - membership subscriptions, interest groups, financial affairs and so on. The Trust can only offer advice and guidance from its national stance. One example must suffice. There is no lower age limit for membership of the third age - only the agreed stipulation that participants must no longer be engaged in full time gainful employment. Yet we hear of U3As which include a lower age limit (usually fifty) in their publicity.

The national executive occupies a rather uncomfortable position - part leadership, part reflection of the views and aspirations of its U3A members. While this 'works' -otherwise the movement would not have reached its present position - there are issues to be resolved in the next period of development. Indeed the Trust is currently engaged in a complex consultation exercise with a view to introducing structural changes.

Outsiders often express admiration of the daring educational self help experiment, going on to ask what preparation and support is offered to aspirant Group Leaders who have had no experience of organising adult education groups. While an increasing number of U3As do organise some activities and the Trust supplies palpable support in the form of start up leaflets, a Resource Centre, providing a loan service of non-book learning materials, and Subject Networks, there is, as yet, no national scheme which can be offered to or adapted by local groups. Indeed there is more than a little resistance to the very notion of 'training'.

A resistance, harder to combat, is the widespread misunderstanding of the principles found among participants who have joined a U3A expecting to be 'taught' by paid tutors and happy in the passive role common in some other institutions of life long learning. While there is comfort to be found in the statistics quoted earlier, our surveys were essentially snapshots and it is not uncommon to find third agers who have never been fully apprised of the movement they are joining.

The Interest Groups cited earlier are, in many cases, examples of best practice in areas of study which do not depend on the mutual progression of members of a settled group. Foreign language study provides us with an obvious example of another type of group. The flexible organisation common in most U3A allows members to join at any time. While the best of 'beginners' groups' in, say, French will have strategies in place to accommodate them with no loss to established participants, the whole subject of 'progression' presents many local committees with problems. (It should be said in passing that the problem of progression in foreign language learning is not restricted to older learners' groups.)

How should this form of later life learning be evaluated? In statistical terms the growth and development of the UK U3A movement provides clear evidence of the value placed on it by its members and, slowly but surely, by the educational establishment. Conventional methods of

qualitative assessment, however, are scarcely appropriate to this unconventional form of learning where every person who joins the U3A potentially expands its curriculum. Perhaps a better measure is in terms of the Interest Group's ability to sustain and develop itself.

A major area of debate is the vital connection between 'socialising' and 'learning'. It is clear that many people derive benefit in health and well being from becoming a member of a U3A. In addition, friendships are made and renewed and this whole dimension is so strong that some U3As are led to declare that their principal *raison d'être* is 'social' rather than 'educational'. This stance of course is one which proclaims a fundamental misunderstanding of the movement. Just as 'the play way' once stood for the fine idea that children learn most effectively when they are enjoying themselves (and acknowledged that 'fun' could be hard work!), the U3A is the main embodiment of that notion in the UK today.

While for the majority of UK U3A members the regular local meetings described above constitute their major involvement in lifelong learning, regional gatherings, local study days and residential summer schools organised by the Third Age Trust and, increasingly by regional groups, provide other important opportunities to combine learning and social contact. It is on such occasions that the balance is often redressed so that self-help learning is underpinned by formal contributions from external experts of repute. A good example of this occurs at the annual series of science-based lectures provided exclusively for U3A members by the Royal Institution of London.

Major national institutions collaborate with the Third Age Trust in different ways: the WEA (Workers Educational Association), NIACE (the National Institution for Adult and Continuing Education) and the Open University pool information, ideas and, in some cases, resources with the Third Age Trust to ensure that older learners may benefit from their collective offerings. In addition and more intimately connected to the self help learning process are the Shared Learning Projects which have been developed in recent years and which involve a partnership between teams of U3A members and the staff of such institutions as the British Museum, the Royal Opera House and the National Maritime Museum. In these projects the U3A members undertake research using the institution's resources or artefacts and present results which often reveal hitherto unknown aspects of the objects studied. This type of project is of increasing interest to U3As throughout the UK and has also recently been presented to a European group of older learners through the good offices of IAUTA which through its range of international contacts and its website is able to both contribute to and widen the learning opportunities available to older learners.

In looking to the future there are a number of factors which need to be taken into account and which can provide an interesting mix of positive and negative scenarios. The so-called 'new technologies' are already providing better communication within and between U3As nationally and internationally. These technologies are also offering diversity of learning opportunities through On-Line Courses, both tutored and untutored, and for those who are either isolated or housebound, the potential of a 'virtual' U3A whose members meet and learn together in cyberspace. The On-Line Course provision is already well established with a take-up of some 800 members of UK U3As in the past year. The Virtual U3A is still at the pilot stage but with increasing availability and familiarity with home computers, it is likely to become more firmly established.

An often discussed aspect of the future of lifelong learning concerns the so-called 'baby boomers', that generation of older people born in the 40s and 50s whose life-style and opportunities, not to speak of their retirement conditions, are seen to be very different from those applicable to the current third agers. Will they have the time, energy and resources to participate in later life learning? Will their level of pre-adult learning be such as to diminish their interest or

motivation for the kind of learning described in this paper? If those questions can only provide speculative responses, what is more certain is the likelihood of greater inter-generational contact and interaction. In an address to the recent IAUTA Congress in Rheims, Madame Catherine Vautrin, Minister for Social Cohesion and Equality in the French Government, made the point that today the generations overlap in a way which contrasts with earlier times when a thirty year old might well have already lost both parents. At 60 one is no longer at the end of a chain but at a crucial intermediate point between two generations and this co-existence places a major responsibility on the older generation in terms of transmission of knowledge and culture. Mary Vulcan (in an unpublished thesis) makes this same point, as it were in reverse, when she states that if we exclude third agers from learning opportunities, we risk the loss of the cultural capital that they have amassed during their lifetime and we deny them a role in the on-going development of our culture.

The Third Age Trust and IAUTA have a common interest in the maintenance and development of third age learning against a background of growing demand and, in many countries, diminishing resources. The future will demand leadership from such federal bodies among their own members in promoting a greater level of community involvement in what is often termed ‘outreach’; a similar effort will be required in developing a better public understanding of the value of later life learning not only for its participants in terms of their physical and mental well-being but also for the communities in which they live.

So, to conclude, as is said of AIUTA, so with the whole field of third age learning, “if it didn’t exist, it would need to be invented.”

Stanley Miller and Keith Richards

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Interactive Geragogy		ingentaconnect.com
		reviewing.co.uk/research/experiential.learning.htm#top
Third Age Trust		www.u3a.org.uk
AIUTA		aiuta.org

LIVING AN INTEGRATED LIFE

A partnership project by On Purpose Ltd and Mowat Research Ltd

Dr Harriet Mowat and Norton Bertram-Smith

The essence of successful ageing is the same as for successful living at any age – living an integrated life. Mahatma Ghandi says that happiness is to be found when the things that one thinks, says and does are all the same. In our later years however this may seem even more urgent – those whose lives have been spent meeting the needs of others, or taking a conventional path in relation to career or family or personal life, may feel anxious that time is running out if they are to fulfil their deepest desires.

In this context, the purpose of learning in later life has to be emancipatory – to set people free to be themselves - to plant a thousand flowers.

The purpose of learning in later life is to empower oneself. Our society fears the ageing process, and the most frequent response advocated for those in later years is to deny it – to pretend to be younger, to stave off those grey hairs at all costs. Yet in denying our ageing, we are also denying our life's experiences and the sense we have made of them. So the best learning opportunity we can offer older people is support for the journey into themselves, to identify their own values, dreams and purposes, and to help them re-orientate themselves onto their own life's journey. We need a paradigm shift – from wage slave to world citizen.

A personal change programme following these principles has been designed and offered to oil and gas companies, which like other organisations in the developed world are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit from the graduate market. This programme is aimed at workers over 55 who want to take personal control of their working lives. It helps them to review their life goals and visions and to identify new ways of achieving these. For the older employee, this programme offers a way of bringing meaning back into the term 'career'; for the employer, the programme supports the optimum use of the workforce in the achievement of the organisation's goals. It is hoped that this programme will be piloted in advance of the conference.

Norton Bertram-Smith, Director of On Purpose, provides specialist leadership and business development coaching. Having recently left the corporate world as Managing Director of BAA Aberdeen Airport, he brings a proven track record in leading strategic change. www.onpurpose.co.uk

Dr Harriet Mowat is director of a small research and development company which focuses on "putting ageing into perspective". Mowat research works with organisations in all sectors using an assessment tool - the age driver. This helps optimise the workforce in terms of age and opportunity. www.mowatresearch.co.uk

ADULT LEARNING AND OLDER VOLUNTEERS

Denise Murphy, UK Director
Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and
Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP)

Abstract

Volunteering by older people has been seen as a way of unlocking a powerful force for community gain, and what CSV's Retired and Volunteer Programme (RSVP) argues is that it is also a most effective way of providing adult learning opportunities for older people. Our programme of activities is largely led and delivered by volunteers with a staff ratio of 1:500.

WHY IS VOLUNTEERING AN IMPORTANT ENGINE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT LEARNING?

- *Many older people, particularly if they have not had happy experiences with formal education in the past, are unwilling to engage with educational opportunities in later life.*
- *Older people who volunteer become involved in education, almost despite themselves, because they need to formally learn new skills to volunteer, or they learn new information informally as a direct result of their volunteering activity.*
- *Volunteering provides a portal through which a wide range of older people can learn and develop.*

RSVP is a UK wide programme (12,000 volunteers) which offers the opportunity to volunteer to anyone over the age of 80, with no upper age limit, in which ever type of activity interests them. The adult learning opportunities provided by volunteering with RSVP are both formal and informal and currently fall into a number of areas:

FORMAL LEARNING-

- *volunteers are given opportunities to go on nationally accredited training to acquire a skill, which will help them undertake their voluntary role more effectively*
- *volunteers are given in house training sessions in a number of areas, including communications, I.T., writing etc*
- *volunteers are provided with lectures/talks /workshops by other agencies to help them learn about health services/public policy making/health & safety etc*

INFORMAL LEARNING-

- *Volunteers are provided with individual coaching by more experienced volunteers or staff on a whole range of skills-running meetings/developing communications/I.T./project management/fundraising/financial management*
- *Volunteers learn about other generations/different religions/other communities*
- *Volunteers who work across communities also crucially gain insights into the challenges faced by those whose life experiences are very different from their own*

Denise Murphy

UK Director of CSV's Retired & Senior Volunteer Programme. Trustee of the Older People's Advocacy Alliance and member of the Centre for Intergenerational Practice Advisory Board. Long career in local authority and voluntary sector community work and management.

Introduction

Volunteering by older people has been seen as a way of unlocking a powerful force for community gain by a number of UK government strategies in the last 5 years."Opportunity Age-

meeting the challenge of Aging in the 21st Century” was produced by the Department of Works and Pensions in England in 2005 , and specifically refers to volunteering as an important mechanism for unleashing community gain, community learning ,and as a tool to maintain the mental and physical health of older people. Similarly the strategies for older people in Wales and Scotland that have been produced by the regional governments also highlight the great benefits that both accrue to older people themselves, and to society. Is it possible to claim that volunteering by older people and the communities they serve is not only a benefit to them, but is also a vehicle for learning? CSV’s Retired and Senior Volunteer Programme (RSVP) argues that it is a very effective way of providing adult learning opportunities for older people.

HOW DOES RSVP OPERATE ?

RSVP started almost 20 years ago as a programme at CSV designed to recruit, deploy and support people aged over 50 who wanted to volunteer. We started with one volunteer in Kent in 1988 and currently have 12,000 registered volunteers across the UK.

A key belief in RSVP is that volunteers can organise and sustain themselves if given the right sort of help. RSVP has 440 volunteers who are organisers, and only 25 full-time equivalent staff.

The network of volunteer organisers are based in communities across the country and their task is to identify locally useful activities for volunteers, and then recruit , train and support local retirees to undertake these jobs. As long as the activity identified is of use to the community then an RSVP volunteer can undertake it.

RSVP did not set out to provide learning opportunities in any formal sense to older people, but by default we have come to realise that volunteering is a perfect way of helping a range of older learners acquire new skills.

WHY IS VOLUNTEERING AN IMPORTANT ENGINE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADULT LEARNING?

Many older people, particularly if they have not had happy experiences with formal education in the past, are unwilling to engage with educational opportunities in later life. This is particularly true of older people living in areas of social deprivation, people with sustained disabilities and people from BME communities. Engaging such people in volunteering projects that they are deeply committed to has often helped them overcome their antipathy to “learning”.

Older people who volunteer become involved in education, almost despite themselves, because they need to formally learn new skills to volunteer, this is particularly true in the field of new technology. A large number of older volunteers learn new information informally as a direct result of their volunteering activity. This is often true of those involved with a project where they have a defined non-technical role (eg helping sign post visitors at a heritage site) but through regular immersion in the activity find they have developed a deep knowledge of a subject.

Volunteering provides a portal through which a wide range of older people can learn and develop. RSVP is a UK wide programme which offers the opportunity to volunteer to anyone over the age of 50, with no upper age limit, in which every type of activity is available to them. We therefore find that we have recruited people from a very wide social and educational background because of the diversity of the tasks. We have a retired school teacher who learnt how to paint, an archivist who learnt how to construct budgets and write funding bids, and a retired care worker who learnt how to chair meetings.

The adult learning opportunities provided by volunteering with RSVP are both formal and informal and currently fall into a number of areas:

FORMAL LEARNING-

Volunteers are given opportunities to go on nationally accredited training to acquire a skill, which will help them undertake their voluntary role more effectively. eg.

- Computer training courses-seven years ago only 10% of RSVP organisers used computers, now over 50% do, and in many cases they have been assisted in acquiring the equipment, then helped to choose and pursue an appropriate course.
- Energy efficiency courses. The Energy Challenge project which pro-actively targets people in fuel poverty in communities in Scotland and London has recruited volunteers who either do a one day intensive course in energy efficiency, or do a full City & Guilds course on energy efficiency

Volunteers are given in house training sessions in a number of areas which help them learn a skill and assist them in their volunteering activity, eg.

- Publicity and communications-many volunteers whatever their educational attainments have never had to publicise their work or work with the media. RSVP volunteers who come with experience of the media teach others about how to write press release, write letters to the press, do radio interviews etc.
- Web design-like most modern organisations RSVP is developing local and national websites to promote its work. This is completely in the hands of technical volunteers who are supporting and training others in web techniques.
- Fundraising-many volunteers who are passionate about their community project still find the idea of fundraising a daunting one. Through a series of workshops, mentoring visits and regular e-mail contact we have developed a wide group of volunteers who develop bids and budgets for their local projects and have had some significant successes in raising funds.
- Project management-some volunteers come forward as project organisers with a great deal of enthusiasm, but little project management experience. RSVP through project mentoring handbooks, regular organiser meetings and mentoring meetings between more experienced organisers and new recruits has allowed RSVP to train a large number of people in project management techniques.
- Developing writing skills-all leaflets, pamphlets, newsletters and magazines produced by RSVP are written by volunteers. Some volunteers have come with a lifetime's experience of writing, but again others are enthusiastic amateurs. At our two yearly Gathering of organisers we run workshops on writing techniques, and throughout the year dispatch experienced writers off to help others make a start.
- Photography-at our regular publicity meetings for volunteers, and at the Gathering we run workshops on how to take decent pictures.
- Painting-a popular workshop which has been run for many years by a volunteer artist is called " Art for the Terrified". Volunteers not only learn various artistic techniques, but how to use art as part of their volunteering activity in clubs and day centres.

Volunteers are provided with lectures/talks /workshops by other agencies to help them learn, eg

- Changes in Public policy-anyone working in the field of social welfare or education in the UK has seen a dramatic change in the way local statutory services are administered, and for volunteers who have developed or are hoping to develop projects in their communities, the statutory infrastructure can be confusing. Simply knowing who is now taking a lead role in an area of service can be difficult to establish. As a result we had a series of talks on local government reorganisation at our most recent Gathering, and at

organisers meetings across the UK we discuss the development of social policy and implementation.

- Helping children read- One third of all RSVP volunteers are involved in intergenerational projects in schools, and a great many have been specifically asked to listen to children read. Training in supportive listening is organised in a number of ways by schools and education authorities across the UK, so that volunteers can be helped to support children more effectively.
- Environmental concerns-RSVP has a number of volunteers engaged in environmental projects and as a result organisers meetings regularly invite local speakers to come and discuss their work, and the issues underlying concerns about pollution, energy saving and recycling.

INFORMAL LEARNING

Volunteers are provided with individual coaching by more experienced volunteers or staff on a whole range of skills-

- running meetings-as organisers become more successful and recruit a number of others to join their local project, the need to have more formal meetings arises. Local and national staff spend a considerable time helping new organisers set agendas, organise reports and generally keep to time at meetings.
- developing communications –linking to the local press, writing press releases, developing power points are all skills that volunteers pick up through mentoring and support from more experienced staff and volunteers
- financial management-as groups of volunteers grow and develop they will need not only to raise funds, but to manage it and produce budgets. Volunteers can attend formal training courses on financial management, but many also seek help from experienced volunteer mentors, and use them as a fail safe if the accounts become problematic(VAT is always difficult !)
- Volunteers learn about other generations/different religions/other communities as part of the tasks they undertake. The regular volunteer feedback meetings, and the small pieces of research undertaken by RSVP and external evaluators always point to the wealth of community and intergenerational understanding which is gained by volunteers working with ,or alongside people who are different ages or backgrounds to themselves. Even in quite small communities volunteers have reported how much they have learnt about their communities, which they did not know previously. This is particularly important as so many workers now commute and work outside the towns, cities and villages in which they live.
- Volunteers who work across communities also crucially gain insights into the challenges faced by those whose life experiences are very different from their own. Part of the understanding gained by volunteers is how very difficult the lives of some people can be. On the Energy Challenge our energy volunteers were shocked by the extreme poverty they uncovered in some London boroughs and a number of Scottish communities. School volunteers frequently report how much they feel for the children they are supporting, who report that they do not have a bed of their own, or that they have never met anyone before who has had a job. The importance of this type of understanding of other's plight is at least a small step in the direction of working towards solutions of social ills.

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THE SENIOR LEARNERS' PROGRAMME IN LANCASTER UNIVERSITY: VISION, IMPLEMENTATION AND THE FUTURE

Professor Keith Percy, Head of Department of Continuing Education and Fiona Frank
Workshop with senior students Liz Rogers and Pauline Stewart.
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Abstract

The Department of Continuing Education at Lancaster University has been involved for many years in provision for older learners, with a successful and well-established week-long Summer School (the 'University of Later Life'), and a Certificate in Research Methods for Older Adults – one cohort of which has set up a successful research consultancy staffed entirely by older people. In September 2006 the Department branched out with a new provision, the 'Senior Learners' Programme' – a weekly 'University experience' for senior learners, aiming to promote the potential of the older person as a learner, a worker, and as a citizen by - increasing participation in the widest range of learning opportunities by senior learners, bringing Lancaster University within the reach of the senior learner in new ways, bringing the senior learner to the attention of the whole of the University.

Currently within the Programme, on one day each week, there is a range of different opportunities and types of learning situation into which a Senior Learner can opt. There are morning and afternoon general interest courses (in the Spring Term 2007 in subjects such as Yoga, Chinese language and culture, Oral History and Art,.) There are computer workshops run by undergraduate student volunteers; a series of lunchtime talks by University Heads of Department, providing a tour of the University's teaching and research programmes; and visits to different parts of the University. One of the innovatory features of the Programme is the Research Circle, in which Senior Learners who are interested, or actively involved, in research, investigation or enquiry in its many forms meet to share ideas, support and motivate each other. Two of the Senior Learners who joined the Research Circle in the second term have interviewed the other Circle members to find out what research they are doing and why; how being a member of the Research Circle has helped them with motivation, methodology and progress; and what wider benefits they have gained from being part of this group.

In this conference presentation the initial vision behind the Senior Learners' Programme will be discussed and its current stage of implementation analysed; the two student-researchers will present their findings; and the possible future development of the Programme will be outlined.

Fiona Frank is the facilitator for the Research Circle described in this workshop. In 1991 she began at Lancaster University in adult literacy in the Educational Research department, recently moving to the Department of Continuing Education, where she set up the new, evolving 'Senior Learners' Programme'.

Introduction

The Department of Continuing Education (DCE) at Lancaster University has been involved for many years in provision for older learners, with a successful and well-established week-long Summer School (the 'University of Later Life'), and a Certificate in Research Methods for Older Adults – one cohort of which has set up a successful research consultancy staffed entirely by older people. In September 2006 the Department branched out with a new provision, the 'Senior

Learners' Programme' – a weekly 'University experience' for senior learners, aiming to promote the potential of the older person as *a learner, a worker, and as a citizen* by:

- increasing participation in the widest range of learning opportunities by senior learners
- bringing Lancaster University within the reach of the senior learner in new ways
- bringing the senior learner to the attention of the whole of the University.

Currently within the Programme, on one day each week, there is a range of different opportunities and types of learning situation into which a Senior Learner can opt. There are morning and afternoon general interest courses (in the Spring Term 2007 in subjects such as Yoga, Chinese language and culture, Oral History, Art, and Alexander Technique.) There are computer workshops run by undergraduate student volunteers; a series of lunchtime talks by University Heads of Department, providing a tour of the University's teaching and research programmes; and visits to different parts of the University. Lunchtimes also provide the chance for the students as a group to discuss ways in which the University can assist their learning and how the Senior Learners' programme might develop. There is an emphasis throughout the day on each individual working out his/her own learning programme and how the learning resources of the University can contribute to it; and there is an end-of-the-day opportunity for individuals to have one-to-one advice and guidance tutorials

One of the innovatory features of the Programme is the Research Circle, in which Senior Learners who are interested, or actively involved, in research, investigation or enquiry in its many forms meet to share ideas, support and motivate each other.

Two of the Senior Learners who joined the Research Circle in the second term have interviewed the other Circle members to find out what research they are doing and why; how being a member of the Research Circle has helped them with motivation, methodology and progress; and what wider benefits they have gained from being part of this group.

In this paper the initial vision behind the Senior Learners' Programme will be discussed and its current stage of implementation analysed; the two student-researchers will present their findings; and the possible future development of the Programme will be outlined.

1. The vision

Lancaster University has an excellent national profile. It is a Top Ten university in many of the national scales, with internationally known departments and academics. But its image with locals, situated as it is on the top of a hill three miles outside the city of Lancaster with mysterious, distinctive, very visible, new buildings going up (so it seems) daily is sometimes that of those 'boffins who have nothing to do with us'. The local paper, in fact, has recently run a leader article about the term 'boffin' as described to University academics, and whether it is denigratory.

The University, however, has a commitment to Widening Participation and access to its services at every level. In the last eighteen months it has created a new School to enhance its profile in lifelong learning and widening participation activities and programmes. For disadvantaged young people this may mean summer schools, Master Classes, campus visits and/or undergraduate mentors. But Widening Participation is not just about disadvantaged young people. The vision of the Senior Learners' Programme was to try to demystify the university for older adults in the region. Firstly, we worked on the 'parking problem' – providing some new paying car parking spaces near the Senior Learners' Programme venue, and arranging a new

discount bus fare for people coming up to the university one day a week. Then, we set up some 'taster' courses for older adults, who would choose to come up to participate in the offered programme on one day in the week - and while participating in these courses (which did not look very different from the rest of the Continuing Education Open Studies programme) would also hear from University academics and senior managers about the different research, teaching and development programmes going on. They would have a chance to talk to an education guidance worker about their own learning programme; and they would have access to the University library, computer networks and other facilities just like an undergraduate or postgraduate.

I saw this as a golden opportunity to keep the brain active and get into areas of study – the thing that attracts me about the concept is that you can sample a number of very different areas of skill and study, and then you've got the choice of whether you want to do more structured courses, to whatever level inspires you.

– I'd like to become identified with this place, that it's my university – I don't want anything out of it like an MA or a PhD, but the more we hear from people doing tomorrows' and today's work intellectually, like [the speakers] this week and last week, we can say 'it's our university.'

Instead of just doing 'a talk', speakers from around the University who have volunteered (or been coerced) to come to speak to our lunchtime groups have found benefits themselves in engaging in discussions with our Senior Learners.

Professor Anne Garden, from the new Medical Studies department (currently run in partnership with the University of Liverpool) has found a constituency of older people willing to act as 'guinea pigs' for her medical students who will have to learn to take medical histories as they grow through the new undergraduate degree which was launched at Lancaster in October 2006. From this contact, we have set up a new course, 'Talking About Health', designed to support senior learners in talking about their medical conditions to health professionals; and Professor Garden will be working closely with a DCE tutor on this development.

Dr Katherine Froggatt, from the International Observatory on End of Life Care, part of the Institute for Health Research, spoke about the work of the Observatory, including a look at the prevalence of cancer and of hospice care internationally. She is involved in organising a series of international conferences on this topic, and needed the views of some local 'older adults' to assist in her planning. She came back to have a discussion with a group of interested Senior Learners at the end of the day; and now two of the participants are involved in the conferences, and have travelled to London and elsewhere giving their input on 'older adults' experiences'.

And some of the members of the Senior Learners' Programme have become involved in an innovative project evaluating a local DWP funded initiative designed to improve services for older adults.

But we have to remember, and respect, that our Senior Learners have their own busy lives outside the University:

It's great that it's just on one day a week. You've got to keep the brain going, but you've got to keep the garden going too!

And the programme is designed for people to take as much, or as little, from it as they wish.

2. The Research Circle: an embodiment of the vision of the Senior Learners' Programme

As well as general interest courses in languages, art, history and other areas, the Senior Learners' Programme was designed to include a series of 'learning circles' - a Study Circle for 'returners', and a Research Circle for people who were involved in their own research projects and wanted to build up some support networks and perhaps link into University academic departments if they were not already involved with them.

The original thinking behind the Research Circle was that there would be a constituency of older adults involved in part time and even full time MA and PhD programmes, who would want to enrol on this programme as well as others who had their own research projects or areas of curiosity and would want to explore these with others. However, due perhaps to the marketing strategy, not one of the twenty adults who have enrolled on this programme over the last two terms were involved in formal postgraduate level education. Although some had gained post-graduate qualifications earlier in life, all of the participants were pursuing research projects of different shapes and sizes purely for their own interest.

Two students who joined the group in its second term, Pauline Stewart and Liz Rodgers, had heard good things about the supportive atmosphere in the group and were interested in joining in, but did not have clear ideas about what to research. We therefore suggested that they research the group itself: and what follows in the next section is the students' work and the result of this suggestion.

Lancaster University Senior Learners' Programme: The Research Circle. (Pauline Stewart and Liz Rodgers).

The Research Circle was originally set up mainly for older students undertaking formal learning to participate in a support group. However, what actually emerged was something different but far more interesting.

In order to explore what happened to the original concept and how it evolved as it did, we decided to ask the group about themselves by means of a questionnaire and then backing that up with a full group discussion in the form of a focus group to give a chance for further explanation and views to be put forward. What follows is our findings on:

- who the Research Circle are and the makeup of the group,
- what they are studying and how they are processing their research
- why they chose the Research Circle
- how it has helped and benefited individuals and
- how it has impacted on individual motivation.

So who are the Research Circle?

In the second term, the group consists of 18 very committed people, there's a 2:1 ratio of women to men, with over 50% over the age of 60. So what we have is a group made up of a wide range of ages and gender, with more importantly for research purposes, broad life and work experiences which can be shared. The vast majority of the group members have had some connection with a university (mainly here at Lancaster) previously such as degrees, diplomas, certificates, courses (usually in the Department of Continuing Education) and others have been involved in the

University of Later Life here at Lancaster. Yet others have attended the University Summer Programme, a two week programme of family holiday learning. A minority had no earlier connection with the university but heard about the Senior Learners' Programme through advertising.

As a result, people felt comfortable in this environment and no barriers to their involvement. One group member who is unable to attend just now due to incapacitating illness is linked by telephone. She has obviously enjoyed the experience so much, the telephone link means she is able to participate and contribute as well as keeping in touch with the rest of the group, despite her being housebound.

One group member said "I feel that the group is beginning to gel in the most amazing way".

How Does the Research Circle Work?

To a large extent the structure and organisation of the Research Circle has been an important factor in maintaining the motivation and impetuosity of the group. 100% of replies on the questionnaire stated that they really enjoyed participating. So how does it work?

First of all it lasts for two hours a week and it is well structured. It has the services of a very skilled facilitator from the DCE to provide encouragement and to ensure that the focus is maintained, and everyone can contribute. Everyone is allowed time to talk in either full group involvement or by splitting into smaller groups of 3 or 4 to allow discussion of their own subject with one another in more depth. This allows everyone to find out what others are doing and give them help and advice where appropriate. At the end of the session individuals will pledge what they will do for next week. But it must be stressed here that no one is obliged to do so and no recriminations apply if this has not been achieved.

Dedicated slots fit into the two hours for discussing best practices or study skills. Students are also given the opportunity to chair focus groups or give presentations as the two of us are doing here.

What is being researched?

There are a whole range of interesting and diverse subjects:

- ☞ Family History
- ☞ Family Networks
- ☞ History of Numbers
- ☞ Witchcraft and Gender in the Cameroons
- ☞ History of Fairy Tales
- ☞ The Life of Amy Johnson
- ☞ Local geomorphology
- ☞ Research into a local African slave
- ☞ The Origins of Life
- ☞ Bertrand Russell – Philosophy & Religion
- ☞ Cultural effects of religion
- ☞ Pursuit of wisdom
- ☞ Role of the housewife in the 1940/50s
- ☞ Evolution – individual thought and atheism
- ☞ How to enjoy retirement
- ☞ The life and times of Cecil Rhodes

The learner doing research into Witchcraft and Gender in the Cameroons will be using this to help in her work out there where she has set up a very active charity working with a local community. The group member who is researching the Origins of the Universe originally joined the group to help with marketing a children's book she wrote; but has been stimulated by the group discussions to move on to this ambitious topic. One learner still has not decided what to research, but is enjoying being part of the group. So an important point here is flexibility.

Another important point is that people seem to be genuinely interested in one another's topics. They find reference books, contacts, magazine articles and generally keep an eye out for anything they think will help. One group member stated that they "didn't want to be disciplined and meticulous as is necessary with a further degree...that's behind me now...I want to do what I want to do."

How This Research is Being Used

As a result of the flexibility and diverse number of subjects being researched, there are also a variety of ways that the research is being used.

- Presentations such as this
- Writing a novel – using what they have researched into creative writing
- Local history
- Still deciding

So, there's no pressure or deadlines.

So we've looked at the who, and the what; now the why and the how.

Why choose the Research Circle?

After all, there are many people here at Lancaster doing their own independent research (the University's Centre for NW Regional Studies is one example which involves mainly older people). The library has any number of isolated souls plodding through their independent work, so why have a research group? The answer is, to be supported.

More than 50% of the learners were engaged in their individual research before joining the group, with another two who were doing a separate course of study and who felt that this course might contribute and clarify their studies, apart from looking for support.

Some people came along out of curiosity and a few because it fitted around their timing of other units throughout the day, rather than as a definite first choice. Perhaps someone was attending a morning course together with a twilight course and wanted to occupy the afternoon. They could sit in isolation in the library to work or visit the Research Circle to have a look.

Some participants are using it as a 'stepping-stone' to embark on a formal course of study – so if a learner felt a little apprehensive, it provides a taster and further field for enquiry.

Another came along as an experiment and found they liked it enough to continue attending 'it's so friendly'.

Someone else wanted to check out that it was not beyond them.

So, there's a number of active learners doing their own research but also using it as a 'springboard' for their enquiries into study/learning.

Additionally, due to the spirit of the group, everyone is interested in what others are doing and are ready to contribute. People say that it's a 'friendly, helpful and stimulating social experience generating a current of great motivation.'

How Has It Helped Motivation

New Ideas Create Motivation – Because there are a number of students in the group, all with separate subjects, there are a range of ideas on methods of research which creates cross-fertilization and in turn motivates another student to pursue that path as well for their own work. An extremely simple example would be the student who interviews a very elderly relative because their subject is their Family Tree; another student realises that there may well be some useful social/historical background which they could use for their study on the domestic/communal experience of a given area, 60 years ago. This then motivates them into seeking out an older person within the particular community to interview.

Diversity is Stimulation – It's open, outward looking and collective, therefore providing further sources of information and possible avenues to explore. By helping others, it introduces more diversity as we can look at their subject as well. So it's not insular where all students are working on the same subject/faculty. Because of the new ideas, this also leads to new methods and gives incentive to have a go at learning a new skill.....like (in Pauline's case) actually doing Power Point rather than have it on my 'to do' list when I get round to it'

Gives Confidence to Speak and Disciplines Study. At the beginning of the session there's a two minute 'check-in' period for every student. It's not enough time to be bored to death and no one can monopolise the time. We are invited to share with the group whatever research/progress we have made over the past week. Because we are aware that this will be part of the weekly programme it encourages us to be a bit more disciplined and mindful that we need to do some work at home to have something to report; so it keeps us motivated and on track. Also, because there's a feeling of general interest, and it's only two minutes, there isn't the preoccupation with thinking about what to say in your slot. We are our own peer group so there's little feeling of apprehension or intimidation which may be present with a class of say 19 year old fast-track undergrads.

Helps with Progress and Focus – The stimulating and positive atmosphere within this ongoing group encourages and supports, and the critique of others gives further motivation, encouraging a determination to stick at it.

The support of the experienced tutor, a part time mature PhD student herself, is very important in the cohesion and progress of the group.

Benefits to Individuals

100% of participants said they had benefited from the Research Circle. This doesn't mean to say it's all perfect, but generally, everyone felt uplifted due to the group one way or another. Some mentioned how much they looked forward to the class. We've separated these benefits into three sections:

Personal Benefits

- Confidence
- Human Contact – especially for the student who's housebound and keeps in touch with the group through a telephone link "it's so supportive. It helps me to stay mentally alert when I'm feeling physically destroyed."
- Not Stressful - No one is demanding work to be handed in or strict deadlines to be met
- Friendships – an unexpected spin-off.

Learning Experience Plus

- Tutorial Support – We must acknowledge the importance of our facilitator primarily (Fiona Frank) and also the personal tutor (Peter Wade) plus the visits we have from a Study Skills tutor (Hillary Walklett). We understand there is help from all faculties if we need it.
- Feeling Part of the University – Some are quite proud of being associated with Lancaster (after all, it's rated according to the Times amongst the top 7 in the country)
- Phone Link – We can all speak directly and collectively to the housebound student without leaving our seats.
- Good Group Dynamics – We have a range of ages within our Senior Learners who in turn have a wide range of life and work experiences. So together with a fairly good gender mix this seems to make it work well.

Health Benefits

- Contact With Others – There seems to be a good emphasis on the advantage of having contact and interaction with like-minded, similarly aged people and it's certainly one of the unique plus points of the Research Circle.

One in four people experience depression at some time in their lives and this increases as we age, due to a number of factors, eg physical health problems, loneliness and a general frustration of not being able to be as active as in our younger years. Then there's always that memory bank problem which we call our "senior moments". With so much emphasis in this group on mental stimulation, motivation and friendly exchange, this must be beneficial to those who are affected by this negative and debilitating experience.

- "My" Time and Stress Reliever – For those who have demanding commitments at home, the Circle provides an enjoyable guilt-free escape from the stresses and pressures of duty and care. Sharing and interacting in the Circle not only gives a change of scene but helps to see things in a different perspective by refreshing the senses.
- Increased Brain Activity – "it's like jump leads, by giving a boost it gets us thinking a bit faster." Inspiration doesn't stop with our research; it affects all of our activities. However, someone said their brain was going into gear at 3 o'clock in the morning – so it's not all positive results!

Conclusions

The responses from course participants are entirely positive. There is a problem about clashes in the afternoon session with other courses which are of interest to participants, which we understand are being dealt with for future years. But the wide range of benefits, the unexpected spin-offs, and the increasing enrolments through the terms, tell their own story.

3. Where are we now, and where are we going?

The students' presentation on the Research Circle, laid out above, gives an overwhelmingly positive view of that particular part of the programme. But where should the Research Circle – and the rest of the Senior Learners' Programme – go next?

Over the last three months we have been planning our programme for the next academic year. We are sticking to Mondays (*"it gives you a reason to get up in the morning"*) – though it turns out that Mondays is the most difficult day for room allocation at the University. (While envying the University of Strathclyde's purpose-built 'Senior Studies Institute', we are keen to ensure that our students are well-integrated within the University and that the accommodation for the Senior Learners' Programme courses is the same as that enjoyed by other undergraduates and post-graduates.) We have introduced a new timetable with a later start, allowing students to use the local 'NOW' travel card which gives free travel after 9.30 a.m. for people aged over 60. We have timetabled 'taster' sessions in the mornings in a wide range of topics, and a series of 'workshop' classes in the afternoons. During these sessions people can do their own thing in Art, Creative Writing, Family History, or Research. There will be student volunteers standing by to help them with any computer issues they may have, there will be some study skills support, and there will be an optional tutorial input in each 'workshop topic' each day. Twice a term the workshop programme changes to a 'visit day' where students will be invited to view the University art galleries, academic departments, or other University facilities; and there'll be a chance for us to hold evaluation discussion sessions or work with people on different topics.

We are hoping to include the students much more in the management of future developments within the programme, and in particular in working with us on marketing, programming and evaluation. The work done by Pauline and Liz, shown in this paper, is a foretaste of what is possible.

However, the Senior Learners' Programme described above is embryonic and experimental. It still has to be formally evaluated and it is vital that it does not settle fixedly into patterns established in the first year or two and thus become too "comfortable". It is clear that the original objectives of the Programme are not yet achieved - in particular we cannot say that the senior learner has been yet brought "to the attention of the whole of the University". That partly is a matter of tactics. Before giving wide internal publicity to the Senior Learners' Programme, and certainly before attempting to have discussions about it with senior managers of the University, we wanted to get something on the ground and to have some successes, however minor. The ultimate goal is institutional recognition, even, possibly, structural and cultural change around the reality of the senior learner in a research-excellent university. What that might mean, and how radical and extensive such change might be, is not yet clear. One approaches such goals crab-wise; the time-frame and the reachable horizon may not be evident at the start.

USING TEACHING AND LEARNING TEMPLATES FOR A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO TEACHING MATURE ADULTS

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Abstract

The paper will draw on recent research into two areas. The first is the psychology of learning among older adults, as evidenced in three doctoral research thesis being completed at the Institute of Education:

- *Experiential Music Learning And The Construction Of Amateur Music Identity among older learners*
 - *Researching Mature Adult Students' Feelings And Emotions Whilst Learning In A Formal Setting*
 - *Studying Development Of Language Acquisition In A Mature Learner*
- and by reference to the literature on learning in adult life generally.*

The second area is that of pedagogy as it relates to older adults, and will refer to a research project for the University of London, dealing with Teaching Templates and Learning Templates respectively. A case will be made for using the principles behind such templates when investigating the nature of learning in later life. The case will be supported and amplified by reference to -

Underlying the templates is the common perception that teaching always involves three elements – content, activities and feedback or assessment – but that these can be infinitely varied. The more systematically the possible variations are understood, particularly in relation to the use of new technologies, the more successful the teaching and learning are likely to be. The Templates projects present a new model for doing this, and the goal of the workshop will be to explore with the participants how the needs, learning preferences, contexts and motivations of older learners can be accommodated within them.

Further, it will be assumed that there are three major factors to consider when analysing older learning:

- *The learner*
- *The context*
- *The learning process*

each of which is very closely tied to the subject being learned.

The workshop will outline these issues, and will give participants an opportunity to reflect on their own learning, and/or that of others they know and/or have taught, in order to make judgments about pedagogy for older learners, or geragogy [Geragogik in Germany] as some would call it.

Anita Pincas has specialised in pedagogy and e-learning [blended and distance] for over 30 years in the Institute of Education, University of London. She trains school, further and higher education teachers for different contexts of learning. Her present initiative is a new short training course for teachers of mature (50+) learners.

General principles behind *learning*

The term itself is ambiguously used, with meanings varying between “discovering” as in “I learned that he was my brother”, or “understanding” as in “I soon learned the system”, or remembering “I learned the formulae for the exam”. Much learning theory slithers between them, and there is an enormous range of strategies that learners use in order to deal with the various aspects of learning.

What is unquestionable is that learning is integral to all living beings, and that human learners adjust to the contexts in which they find themselves. Thus, if they are being taught in a class, they react to what their teachers do. If they are at work, they may have mentors, or else superiors or colleagues and others who may assist them by giving instructions or answering their questions. If they are at home, they rely on their own skills or family help, or any of the many ways that independent learners sustain their ongoing daily just-in-time learning [books and manuals, the media, other people, advice lines, etc.]. The literature is replete with theories of learning, none of which have ever proved totally satisfactory for any purpose. [A useful overview can be found in “Teaching and Learning Models and Approaches” of the e-Learning: Research and Resources page of [Birkbeck college \(n.d.\)](#).]

However, very few learners are very independent, let alone fully autonomous, and this paper assumes that the majority will seek assistance from a teacher or from peers, even if they are learning for self-fulfilment as many older persons do. Motivation is normally considered the key to successful learning, especially that which requires memorisation, though some people may have “better memories” than others. There is debate about the status of what is called “learning styles” [Coffield et al 2004].

Only tentative hypotheses can be made at present about the specific nature of older learning. The premise of this paper is that the learning needs of the older population can be differentiated from those of younger adults, along dimensions only partly similar to those that underlie contrasts between primary, secondary, further and higher sectors. For example motivation and aptitude are universally applicable, but age is likely to show the influence of prior experience, especially of established literacy and numeracy [or lack of], or the effects of career success [or failure], or some decline in memory, or well established learning strategies that could hinder as well as help.

What’s different about mature learners?

It is reasonable to assume that mature learners, that is, aged 50+, will at the same time both bring something to their learning based on their long experience, and also lack some of the skills of younger people. The field is as yet too little researched for anything like safe answers. But there are some aspects of the data that we can accept with fair confidence.

Mary Vulcan believes that a shift is required in our thinking about the mature the learner in clubs, churches, cinemas, theatres, concert rooms, trade unions, political societies, and in the homes of the people where there are books, newspapers, music, wireless sets, workshops, gardens and groups of friends. By the age of 50 and beyond, people have learned to learn in very wide range of contexts outside schools and other formal institutions. Sometimes the learning is **intentional**, that is an individual aims to learn something and goes about achieving that objective. Often there

is **accidental/incidental learning** when in the course of everyday activities an individual learns something that he or she had not intended or expected. But they themselves often dismiss it as unimportant.

Many types of learning are difficult to categorise. A casual conversation between lecturer and student in the corridor may be of great educational value but was in no way planned to be part of the course.

In which setting can third-age learning find a home? Perhaps educational gerontology has mistakenly emphasised **education** in later life and that a more constructive way forward would be to focus on **learning**. Of course, such information learning is a necessary condition for normal human life that continues across the life span. People change and adapt to the situations in which they find themselves, constructing their biography through life experiences as they age and develop. Learning is what makes us who we are.

But many third-agers will seek out formal education and enjoy the challenge of gaining credit for their endeavours, especially those who wish to continue working, perhaps in new areas. . This is especially valid in periods of rapid change where people are called upon to adapt to new circumstances.

In her data analysis of learners at the U3A, Vulkan found that most of them seem to value the camaraderie of learning in a social context. But only 25% considered the U3A to be solely an educational group. These were predominately “male sages”, people for whom life is still an intellectual adventure and who stated their reasons as:

- Mental stimulation
- Continue learning
- Study new subject
- Pursue a particular (named) subject
- Increase knowledge

The other 75% combine social and educational activities with motivation:

- To widen horizons in a social setting
- Meet new, like-minded people
- To keep mind active
- Coping with a life style change (retirement, relocation, bereavement)
- Join friends who were already members
- Recreation
- To keep in touch with people when living alone
- To develop new interests

In short, much of their learning was often simply for pleasure. Moves towards vocationalism and the ensuing loss of much general/liberal education for adults have pushed those seeking life-enhancing learning experiences towards non-formal, self-help organisations. But across both groups, learning was accepted as a normal part of their lives whether it be learning as leisure, learning skills when the need arose or learning through experience. *Adult education was perceived as formal and hierarchical and not always suited to the kind of learning experience they were seeking.*

Tina Manfield investigated older students doing ICT in a formal setting at college in the age range 37 – 76 – 24 students, approx half under and half over 60. The emotional factors affecting these adult learners in relation to motivation during the course were

Fear	Fear Of Failure
Helplessness	Self-Determination
Self-Efficacy	Self-Esteem
Anger	Arousal
Anxiety	Frustration

Their reasons for participation were:

To keep up with technological progress	58%
To gain knowledge of computers	29%
To promote business	17%
For personal use	17%
For writing letters and word processing	13%
As a challenge	13%
To help the children	8%
On recommendation	8%
Access to gain friendship	4%
For an interest	4%
Insurance for future career	4%
To prove I can do it	4%
Opportunity to access further education	4%
Broaden horizons	4%
Broaden career	4%
For satisfaction	4%
For church work	4%
To ease boredom	4%

She concludes firmly that the affective dimension of learning must not be underestimated. It is a major factor in a successful learning process and outcome. An individual's perception and interpretation of events will influence their motivation and learning outcome. The research findings demonstrated that adult students respond with strong emotions when they are frustrated by less than optimal learning conditions which prevent them from making progress and achieving their learning goals

Angela Taylor studied 8 adult learners over the age of 60 who were learning music in choirs, orchestras, community groups and workshops as well as in 1-1 lessons what their learning means to them. All had had little music education. A key finding was that adults seem to have to satisfy a strong need for achievement, enjoyment and self confidence when they learn the piano and the electronic keyboard. For most of the participants, practising by themselves appeared to be a major source of satisfaction, and as they engaged with their music privately at home they could relax and enjoy the empowerment of connecting with not one, but two musical selves as they listened and played at the same time. This was a new and exciting experience, a fresh start with the discovery of unexpected skills and talents, and a chance to reconnect with their youth at a time in life when much has to be given up or compromised as part of accommodating to being older.

On the other hand, it seems that adult beginners have to overcome their frustration at the difficulties of learning a new language at the same time as acquiring new motor skills. Moreover,

they need to be able to combine this with expressing themselves in a way that meets their personal expectations. They may struggle to resolve a tension between the sophistication of a life-time's engagement with music and the clumsiness of their attempts to articulate their musicality as they come face to face with the difficulties of actually playing their instruments. This struggle is something which adult novices seem to experience as part of their learning, and which children do not. It can add to the intensity of learning an instrument which often seems to be linked with someone emotionally significant.

Freedom of choice in learning is another key issue that distinguishes adults from children. Though often childlike in the instrumental learning situation in which they find themselves, adult beginners seem to weigh up the costs and rewards of their struggle during it. By choosing how they do it, adults can empower themselves through their learning. Facilitating empowerment through identity expression presents a key challenge for tutors.

Rosemary Westwell (2007) observed her own acquisition of Spanish as a mature language learner, and found four interdependent phenomena to be the most important during her experience:

- source material – she needed to trust it;
- her own attitude as it was influenced by circumstances;
- learning method used by teachers or herself on different occasions;
- her variable memory.

Her full set of influences on her learning is:

Approach and Personality	Language learning issues
Attitude to risk-taking and criticism	Memory
Age	Cognitive style
Success	Interest in culture
Motivation	Test results
Adaptation/incorporation of new ideas	Language content
Control of anxiety	Interest in language
Previous learning history	Place
Interest in language	
Personality (especially degree of determination)	
Empathy	
Control of anxiety (not featured)	

General principles behind *teaching*

Material in this section is based on work in progress [Pincas & Basiel (2005-7)].

All learning consists of three universal elements:
Content, Activities, and Feedback or Assessment.

Content

Whatever the learning context, whoever the learners, whether there is one teacher or peer learning, there is always content. . Learners may find it independently, or have it brought to their attention by someone else, who is often a teacher but may be another learner.

Activities

Learners are always active, either mentally or physically experimenting and re-trying as the context requires. They do not come with a *tabula rasa* on which a teacher inscribes knowledge.

For motor and other physical skills their bodies are participatory. The teacher's role is to structure such activities and encourage better strategies for acquisition, understanding, and memory.

Feedback and assessment

Learners always need, and indeed seek, ways of evaluating their own learning. Their own trial and error practice helps them to adjust and unconsciously improve. But it is one of the teacher's key roles to help them recognise the extent of their own competence, as well as to promote further opportunities for improvement.

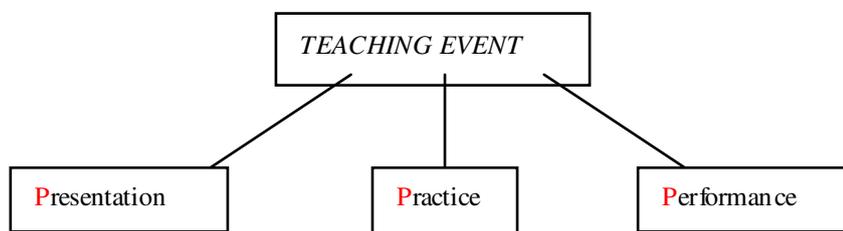
These three elements can be called the **3Ps**:

P1 = Teacher **p**resents the content

P2 = Teacher helps learners to **p**ractice the activities proposed by the teacher, and offers feedback.

P3 = Teacher asks learners to **p**erform by producing evidence of their competence, for which they receive feedback and/or grades.

In a traditional view of teaching, the 3Ps are used in the chronological default order.



But the 3Ps can be manipulated in an infinite variety of ways, as elements are interleaved, merged, or repeated. This is illustrated in the chart below. Underlying the chart is a wide range of possible teaching and learning based on the many further choices within each of the 3P areas.

1	Conventional	Presentation	Practice	Performance
Set a problem for the learners to solve, ask them to apply it, check and summarise the solution.				
The default sequence: Give the knowledge, skills or attitudes first, arrange activities, then check				
2	Feedback responsive	Presentation	Performance	Practice
Give the knowledge, skills or attitudes first, check what further practice is needed, arrange activities.				
3	Resource/research based	Practice	Presentation	Performance
Ask learners to inspect/consult sources of the knowledge, skills or attitudes, summarise the knowledge, skills or attitudes, check.				
4	Discovery based	Practice	Performance	Presentation
Arrange activities through which learners to discover the knowledge, skills or attitudes, check, summarise the knowledge, skills or attitudes.				
4a	Peer constructed learning	Practice	Performance	Presentation
Ask learners to canvass and discuss solutions to a problem, trial the solution, and summarise their findings, with teacher input at final stage.				
5	Problem stimulus	Performance	Presentation	Practice
Set a problem for the learners to solve, check and present the solution, arrange further practice.				
6	Problem application	Performance	Practice	Presentation

What's different about mature learners?

The many factors that are likely to influence older learning include:

- The influence of organisational policies and funding;
- Socio-cultural approaches to older people's learning;
- Existing high levels of motivation, but with some lack of confidence, among the older population;
- The different alignments between teacher/learner, learner/learner in older adult education;
- Older learners' lack of experience in reflecting on their own learning.

In short, the older learners' needs, motivations and opportunities are inseparable from the wider social contexts that may help or hinder the learning process. The parameters are very different from those of early schooling, with its strong assumptions of institutional authority, as well as from higher or further education where there is a tension between society's requirements of young persons and their own developmental needs and interests.

The 3Ps therefore have to be adjusted to relate closely to the personal wishes, feelings, and attitudes of older learner. Their learning processes will in some way be more efficient, and in other ways less efficient than those of younger people. Teachers have long been familiar with the notion of mixed abilities within any of their classes; but in the new older learning context they have to accommodate new kinds of ability variations. These will be partly developmental, since adults age at different rates just as children do, partly experiential, and partly under the pressure of social conditions.

In the light of mature people's assumed life experience, **content** will often need to be selected or presented so as to recognise much prior knowledge. The older learner may already be partly or wholly skilled in the field, or may resent an attempt to simplify a subject or to make it more "motivating". A pre-designed curriculum may have to be dealt with very flexibly. On the other hand, some older persons may lack literacy or numeracy skills, having missed earlier educational opportunities, and will need preparatory help. In other cases, where the older learner is studying for pleasure and fulfilment, a superficial understanding of many aspects of the subject may be more appropriate than a deeper, critical approach to a more limited area. But if the learner is urgently re-training for new employment opportunities, s/he might be prepared to make efforts that younger people would not make.

For similar reasons, learning **activities** will have to be adjusted in the light of the older learners' goals and preferences. If pleasure is the key factor, then memory strategies may be less important than if the study is for formal qualifications. On occasion the teacher may need to convince older learners schooled by traditional methods that they can discover information or solve problems either by themselves or in peer groups. Practising new motor skills might require more time than with younger people, and health issues could be significant.

Feedback is likely to be especially significant for older persons who have lost confidence, but formal assessment might often be irrelevant.

The challenge of making learning available to older persons for continuing participation the workplace and/or for health and fulfilment, is opening up new avenues of research. These will be significant for our more general understanding of learning and teaching, not merely for the specific newly emerging mature population.

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PURPOSE AND POTENTIAL: A PROPOSAL FOR LEARNING IN OUR LATER YEARS

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Abstract

In our later years, living a purposeful life takes on a different meaning. Our early years are spent educating ourselves and building life experience. Traditionally, undergraduate university education prepares young people to earn a living and continuing education offers professionals career and management advancement. Upon retirement, as the demands of university, family and the workplace diminish, we once again wonder 'what's next'? To continue lifelong learning amidst peers has become a welcome choice. Since the 1970s when a few university faculty members saw the potential to continue teaching on campus after retirement, over 400 institutes have been established in North America. In this spirit McGill Institute for Learning in Retirement (MILR) was launched in 1989 as a day program for older Continuing Education students. Small study groups, weekend lectures and social gatherings provide opportunities for personal engagement and community involvement for over 900 members from various walks of life.

With the steady growth of MILR, liaison with McGill has been a backbone that provides continuity and administrative support for devoted volunteers who take on administrative and teaching responsibilities. MILR volunteers, mostly retired professionals, set their own agenda and this has sustained their program and met their goals. Our Dean speaks enthusiastically about lifelong learning; however Continuing Education's range of programs is not fully recognized by the university and suffers from budgetary constraints. Each month the world's older population increases by 1.2 million. The link between education and health is vital to maintaining our quality of life. Universities are the natural place to build bridges and support the educational needs of all ages. People, like members of MILR, feel healthier, happier, more respected and more independent when they pursue active learning in their senior years and society benefits as a whole. Developing a collaborative communication strategy that aligns MILR with Continuing Education may increase the university's awareness of the potential of lifelong learners-- in particular their academic staff transitioning to retirement who want to stay connected. Strengthening relationships with the university depends upon leaders with vision who can draw upon the existing potential.

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Introduction: The Purpose of Learning in Our Later Years

In our later years, living a purposeful life takes on a different meaning. Our early years are spent educating ourselves and building life experience. Facing retirement, as the demands of schooling, family and the workplace diminish, we may once again wonder "what's next?" Continuing one's education amidst peers has become a welcome choice for seniors after retirement. Learning in our later years helps stimulate brain function so that we feel healthier, happier, more respected and more independent. The motto is: *You don't stop learning when you grow old; you grow old when you stop learning.*

Attending study groups and lectures at the McGill Institute for Learning in Retirement (MILR) provides enjoyment and a daily purpose for over 900 members. They make friends, stay active, exchange viewpoints and expand their knowledge of subjects they had little time to pursue over the years. Some members take on an additional learning curve by volunteering to sit on a

program committee or run the office. The stable of 70 moderators and lecturers are also volunteers and are kept busy during four semesters leading over 120 study groups and presenting 100 lectures. Their rewards are a sense of ownership a successful program within an internationally renowned university.

MILR's success is due to its peer teaching program and its dedicated volunteers. Nevertheless, the potential for future expansion reached a plateau several years ago. In order to grow, it is essential that Institutes' (a) remain self-sustainable, a requirement for any university program and (b) assume the role of ambassador for lifelong learning.

II. Five Challenges to Institutes for Lifelong Learning

Traditionally, university faculties prepared young undergraduates for life and continuing education offered adults professional career advancement. The concept of learning in retirement emerged during the 1970s when Institutes for older learners were created by retired professors who wanted to remain connected to their universities. Due to the support of Elderhostel, the EIN Network has encouraged the development of new Institutes for 20 years.

How Institutes for Lifelong Learning face particular challenges and engage the potential of their volunteer workforce will determine future growth. Five overarching challenges are: (i) funding, (ii) program activities, (iii) recruiting, (iv) university relations and (v) communications.

(i) Funding

Universities that host older adult educational programs have budgetary constraints that place conflicting demands on financial and human resources, on scheduling and on space. The strain on resources may force administrators to re-examine the place of senior students on campus. Quebec universities are struggling with inadequate budgets and a cap on tuition. McGill Principal Heather Monroe-Blum often speaks publicly about the crisis in university funding and its disturbingly low priority among a public that takes educational services for granted.

Non-credit programs rely entirely upon tuition and membership fees to cover operating costs. MILR was self-sustaining from the beginning and contributes a percentage of its revenue to the university and its libraries. It has an endowment fund from accumulated surpluses and donations. The financial and administrative benefits of being a program of the Centre for Continuing Education are considerable, together with the dedicated efforts of volunteers to keep tuition low - a crucial factor for any seniors' program. Last year saw the first fee increase in six years. A fund-raising committee was formed to increase members' awareness of the importance of gifting.

(ii) Program Activities

Since 1989 MILR has thrived offering peer-teaching study groups with skilled moderators. Several years ago lectures were introduced despite misgivings that they overstepped the mandate. When Friday lectures proved very popular, Sunday musical get-togethers and Saturday movies were introduced followed by Wonderful Wednesdays during July and August. MILR lectures, due to capacity limits, are only open to members who can bring a friend. We are now looking into the feasibility of wider distribution and accessibility through the web. A group of special technical volunteers will need to be trained to record the lectures.

Lectures are an important revenue source, but further program expansion has waned. The task of organizing public lectures, outreach to seniors' residences and a public concert required too much volunteer time and coordination. SPEAK (Seniors Practice English And Know-how) our

intergenerational collaboration with the English Language Department is a small success story and the presenters love the opportunity “to give back.”

(iii) Recruiting

Voluntary leadership is both the strength and the weakness of lifelong learning programs. In general, volunteers tend to regard the hours they put in as spare time “leisure activity.” Though a few volunteers give MILR a great deal of their time, it is still part-time. Nominating members to run the Institute is an annual challenge as leaders are requested to make two- to six-year commitments. The number of study group leaders has not increased in the past five years. Members are ageing, making more demands and able to contribute less. The over-90 Club has 6 members. Long-time members retain a sense of entitlement and are frustrated at the overcrowded corridors and classrooms. Recruiting qualified fresh volunteers who have the patience to manage the busy timetable and the demanding clientele is a delicate job.

Quebec being a francophone province, it is difficult to project whether discretionary Anglophone programs for seniors will attract boomers as many left Montreal in the 70s and 80s. MILR is a haven for Anglophones with educated backgrounds, but immigration trends indicate Arabic may become our second language, after French. A particular local challenge is that the volunteer ethic is more prevalent in the Anglo than the Francophone sector.

(iv) University Relations

Seniors’ programs are enhanced by a healthy liaison with the host university. The arms-length relationship MILR has ascertained is heading into uncharted territory. Dean Glenn Cartwright has a vision for Continuing Education as two-way highway bridge between McGill’s focus on research and scholarship and serving the community. As an educator and a psychologist, he speaks enthusiastically about the role of the university to reach across the life span and takes a personal interest in what motivates MILR’s participants.

There is no mandatory retirement age in Quebec and McGill professors are not opting to retire at the forecasted 5% rate. The office for Academic Personnel has recently contacted us to look into incentives for professors to maintain their connection to the university. A strengthening of university relations would be timely.

The university link is a reassurance for older adult programs. Those without sponsorship face uncertainty, such as the long-standing Creative Retirement Manitoba and the network TALIS. Third Age Learning International Studies was founded at the University of Toulouse over 25 years ago and then housed at the University of Saskatchewan. It just suspended its excellent mission to promote lifelong learning at a grassroots level due to a lack of volunteer and support staff.

(v) Communications

MILR’s experience has been that “word of mouth” is the best advertising. Leaders had worried there would not be adequate space to meet increased demand. This has never fully materialized except during the fall term and when moderators are called upon to repeat popular study groups. The result is that little is budgeted for Communications. To increase in-house awareness about the importance of contributing, Maintaining Momentum (MM) workshops are organized for the members every two years and ensuing recommendations are passed on to the committees. One immediate result of the MM workshop this year was that leaders made appointments with hospital HR departments to promote MILR.

III. Consolidating: Purpose and Potential

Ageing well is the ongoing process of meeting life transitions and finding purpose in balancing activities and leisure. Active engagement is crucial. Many older volunteers have higher degrees and the time and inclination to give back to the society that has given them opportunities to become relatively comfortable and to stay healthy. They just need to be asked. Who knows better what seniors want to learn. When we teach we learn the most. Being matched with tasks that enhance their natural and professional skills, volunteers are more productive. Some countries are looking at creative ways to re-introduce the silver-grey workforce.

The Special Senate Committee on Aging “*Embracing the Challenge of Aging*” looked at redefining retirement. Their intention is to challenge assumptions and to explore alternative ways of organizing society and ultimately to redefine the role of government in helping Canadians age well. CATALIST affiliates with expertise in “active living” in the voluntary non-profit sector are being consulted. Our goal is to help government recognize that older volunteers with a background in older adult education are ready to contribute but their organizations cannot be expected to bear all the costs. The civic contribution of seniors teaching seniors needs to be recognized by academic institutions, governments and corporations.

Each month the world’s older population increases by 1.2 million. The link between education and health is vital to maintaining our quality of life. As we age the brain deteriorates from natural processes and disuse and everything slows down. People have difficulty understanding and being understood. Following a conversation, the news or a lecture becomes more difficult, even more so for people with hearing loss.

During the Decade of the Brain in the 90s increased funding into brain research changed scientific thinking about how we learn as we age. Although learning requires more time and repetition and multi-tasking becomes more difficult, people can be taught to think more efficiently. A person’s ability to think abstractly and maintain concentration over a period of time improves significantly by learning something unfamiliar. The hippocampus is stimulated when studying a new skill, whether a musical instrument, a foreign language or downloading your photos from a digital camera. The “grey gaming” industry is capitalizing on our desire to “age smart” by developing fun mental workouts that stimulate brain function and reduce memory loss.

If we acknowledge that the purpose of learning in our later years is to maintain cognitive functioning and enhance mental and emotional health, it follows that lifelong learning Institutes are an inexpensive healthcare alternative for older adults. The benefits are even greater if the learning activity is personally meaningful.

Regardless of the challenges, enrolment in senior programs has risen significantly since the 1980s. A recent poll by CATALIST, the Canadian Network on Third Age Learning, housed at the University of Regina’s Senior Education Centre, revealed that between 60,000 and 100,000 older adults are actively involved in lifelong learning programs across Canada.

The main threat to older adult programs is to keep a low profile and be silent. Boomers need to know there are friendly environments that will stimulate their potential to learn. Many women face lives of solitude as they age and Institutes offer them new directions. 75% of MILR members are women, yet they make up only 40% of the moderators and lecturers. Women should be inspired to lead study groups to alleviate the shortage. Moderating teaches leadership and presentation skills and this translates into the confidence volunteers need to step into governance. When people can express their points of view and be heard, it boosts their self-esteem and they feel: “I can do that!” In return, volunteers will be encouraged to get involved in planning and achieving their organization’s long-range goals.

IV. A Proposal: Promote Learning in Our Later Years

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Canada is better prepared to meet the challenges of an aging population than many OECD countries. If Canadian society is to be prepared for the elephant moving through the pipeline by 2030, seniors need to be consulted and become the agents who influence national social policy.

There are strong signs of private support across North America. The visibility of lifelong learning increased dramatically when 100 U.S. Institutes received million dollar endowments from the Osher Foundation. In British Columbia Simon Fraser University's Seniors Program received a \$1.5 million gift which was matched by the university to create an endowment fund to meet boomers' demands and for the salaries of the program director and an assistant in perpetuity. Ryerson University's Chang School of Continuing Education in Toronto has a new home for its 70,000 students and is planning a new direction in seniors' programming that honours the existing programs. LIFE (Learning Is ForEver) embarked on a fundraising campaign and pledged \$125,000 over five years to support a \$2.5 million university endowment fund. These excellent fund-raising campaigns are some examples other Institutes can follow.

It is an opportune time for the leaders of lifelong learning institutes to self-promote. The Canadian Council on Learning Older Adult Working Group, of which CATALIST is a member, has mounted a national campaign to encourage retirees to improve their health and well-being by participating in lifelong learning programs. The Ageing Well campaign travels across Canada to medical and education conferences during World Health Day, National Volunteer Week and Adult Learners Week.

The Health and Learning Knowledge Centre is acquiring resource material, but more research is needed about seniors' specific learning needs and capabilities. More exploration is needed on modes of delivery and educational technologies such as video-conferencing, e-learning and interactive software. New venues need to be explored for lectures, field trips and virtual classrooms. Consulting with individual members of lifelong learning Institutes will help define what retirees want now and for the next five years.

V. Conclusion: Five Suggestions

The 2006 **Report Card on Seniors in Canada** produced by the National Advisory Council on Aging confirmed that 80% of seniors are enjoying a better quality of life than even five years ago. Active learning is a key factor of wellness. Five suggestions are offered for further exploration.

1. Offer incentives to recruit older volunteers

Seniors make up a high percentage of the volunteer workforce. The dual purpose of creating incentives to recruit and train more volunteers to teach lifelong learning is (a) Institutes gain the workforce to guarantee future sustainability and (b) seniors have greater opportunities to utilize their expertise to give back.

2. Support productivity and engaged learning

Although people live longer and healthier they tend to retire earlier and younger. A way to mitigate the effect of the demographic time bomb is to support the productivity of older workers between 55 and 72. Facilitating their attendance through off-campus electronic programs that engage their learning potential would benefit part-time retirees with busy schedules.

3. Develop community programs

Programs that build bridges alleviate the risks of social isolation that seniors experience and improve their quality of life. In Quebec, many seniors have fewer family members living near them than in the past. Strong community programs offer regular public lecture series, TV shows, field trips and monthly discussion groups. The Silver Screen Festival produced by LIFE at Ryerson also features discussions on the films.

4. Consult with leaders

The reality of tomorrow requires that leaders communicate with leaders of other senior organizations to discuss funding, curriculum and administration. In addition, consulting current research and conference proceedings from network affiliates can help leaders plan their course of action. The willingness to open the doors wider to young retirees and to cultures migrating into our cities is necessary for the recruitment of tomorrow's leaders.

5. Secure funding

Institutes require secure funding to stay affordable and as assurance against having to restrict membership. Institute leaders need to reach out and locate private donors and public support. Collaboration with the host university is essential. MILR's own alumni could be galvanized as respected ambassadors to raise public interest in lifelong learning.

To conclude, the concept of retirement has changed and retirees need to speak out. The membership voted last year to drop Retirement from our name and become MILL - the McGill Institute for Lifelong Learning. Although McGill Senate has not yet approved the name change, the initiative has brought MILR into the university spotlight. The horizon seems brighter with our Dean's vision to make MILR an important lane on the university's bridge. The resolution of our name change, like the proposal and suggestions outlined in this paper, will depend upon the vision of the incoming leadership and maintaining the momentum!

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AGE AND THE WORKPLACE - EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING OLDER WORKERS

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Abstract

South West Opportunities for Older People, SWOOP, is working toward a labour market in South West England and beyond where older people are able to contribute their full potential without facing discrimination. A funded project under EQUAL, also supported by the SW RDA. Through a variety of IAG provision and support the project has identified a number of issues. Older people are a highly differentiated population and there is no single approach, service or agency that can meet their differing needs. Information, advice and guidance has shown itself to be valuable, whether offered as part of a comprehensive support service or as a stand-alone career management seminar. Advisors, trainers and counsellors who mirror the age and experience of their clients and who offer services focused on the needs of older people are likely to be far more effective in achieving a suitable outcome for the individual. Formal government agencies are often unable to provide this type of service and are regarded in negative ways by older people. Non statutory agencies and private organisations may have a greater role to play in supporting older people's return to the labour market, as the conflict between administering and policing benefits is removed from the equation.

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The SWOOP project has confirmed that many people over the age of 45 do wish to remain in work and actively seek opportunities to stay working or engaged in the workforce. The age of those we supported by the project had little, if any, relationship to their career ambitions and potential to succeed and keep on succeeding. The overwhelming feedback from individuals across all activities is the value they placed on opportunities for self assessment and reflection; on identifying what they needed and finding a way of meeting that need, directly appropriate to their situation and circumstance.

One of the values of undertaking SWOOP came from the variety of activities being piloted and assessed. It became clear early on that the participants in the programmes were highly differentiated in terms of qualification, work experience, aspiration, motivation and purpose. The advantage of our range of offering was that it indicated the importance of a diversity of approach, services or agencies in meeting the differing needs of the 45 year and older population.

Information, advice and guidance has shown itself to be valuable, whether offered as part of a comprehensive support service or as a stand-alone career management seminar. Many of those attending the career management programme indicated it was at a time of identifying options, making life choices and planning for the future. A number of participants to this programme were still in work when they attended. It became evident that there was a wide spread ignorance by

older people of statutory provision, although the type and level of provision may be inadequate for some. Yet the benefits accrued by individuals through the IAG offered as part of the project, appear enormous.

Advisors, trainers and counsellors who mirror the age and experience of their clients and who offer services focused on the needs of older people are likely to be far more effective in achieving a suitable outcome for the individual. Older People value working with peers, specifically through group exchanges and activities where sharing experiences has widened understanding and helped identify need. They also value time and support relevant to their needs and initial IAG can mean that the actions taken subsequently are more appropriate and effective. These interventions promote greater self awareness, improve self esteem and help with self confidence. Together with good job search techniques, older people can improve their job prospects.

1. Background – The Project

The SWOOP project was established to test out a number of activities that might contribute to the continued employability of people in the SW over 45 years old, and to conduct research into the effectiveness and viability of these activities. SWOOP also wished to contribute additional relevant research and comment to the demographic debate. For older people themselves, this testing involved a range of different support services to individuals and sought to engage both those employed and unemployed, and those who for whatever reason, were unknown as job-seekers, but nevertheless may wish to take part in the labour market.

For employers, and those working with employers, the project sought to raise the issue of demographic change and its likely implications for the future of the region's businesses. It also wished to engender a change in attitude and work culture leading towards the adoption of age positive practice. The 2006 Age Legislation formed a platform for some of this work. This paper does not cover the work with employers undertaken by the project.

Funded by EQUAL and attracting substantial financial support from the SW RDA, the project started its delivery phase in July 2005, having secured a wide range of partners with an interest in age issues. These included local and regional delivery agencies, voluntary, public and private organisations; national organisations; government agencies and education providers. The rationale for the project stemmed from the national policy documents on age³⁰ and on IAG³¹ that were followed by a regional report on the issue of age³².

1.2 Background – The South West

It was felt that the demographic profile of the SW warranted exploration in both practical and research ways. Within a total population of almost 5 million the SW has a higher proportion of its residents aged 50+ than any other region in England, and its older population is increasing at a faster rate than England as a whole, with 45% of the region's population being over 50 by 2024³³.

In the South West 73% of those aged between 50 and 65 are in work, and 11% are working beyond retirement age, but there are more that want to work. Some businesses do find it hard to recruit to vacancies (47% of all vacancies are hard to fill), but a number of these are generally unattractive being shift work, paid at minimum wage, physically demanding or arduous work, in some cases unsuitable to older people. Quality of work is important to older job seekers, who may still wish to engage in work or careers that are fulfilling and rewarding. There is evidence

³⁰ Opportunity Age – Meeting the challenges of ageing in the 21st Century, (March 2005), DWP

³¹ Am I still needed: Guidance and learning for older adults, (2005), Ford, G. DWP

³² Age and Employability, (2005) Pye, J & Evans, C, Marchmont Observatory/SLIM

³³ State of the South West Region Report, South West Observatory

that well qualified or professional older people may frequently find themselves underutilised in the employment they secure.

Across the SW the picture of vacancies is very different, across sectors and levels, usually dependent on geographical location. Self employment is high for older people, with 14% of the total workforce in the SW being self employed, of which 18% are over 50 with a further 25% of self employed above pension age. As the project discovered, the desire for personal autonomy and discretion and a larger degree of flexibility on how and when to work, can be high among older people, and self employment may be a choice or a default option in the absence of suitable flexible employment.

2. The Skills and Learning Projects.

Across all the activities for older people was the intention to offer advice and guidance, and to ensure that appropriate training or support would follow individual assessment. The five individual projects covered:

- Skills workshops – CV's, application forms, job hunting, IT skills etc., support and counselling, placements – helping build confidence (WorkWise, Exeter CVS, Action For Blind People)
- Advice & Guidance – help with identifying options, making choices, using tools (It's About You, ePortfolio)
- Help for self employment (start your own business - SEESAM)

In three cases³⁴, IAG was in place as part of a larger offering and this allowed for a level of individualised support not often found in training programmes. Two further activities³⁵ were, more conventionally, a series of short training sessions with a focused agenda, Self Employment and Career Management, and these proved less effective in meeting the needs of its participants. From the profiles being collected, it appears that certain activities appealed to different groups within our demographic, though this should be tempered by the fact that each project activity was geographically based, so not all activities were available across the whole of the region and therefore not every service was available to those who may have benefited from it.

Over 250 individuals had participated in the activities up to January 2007, with this number doubling by June 2007. Of those, 65% were between 50-60 years of age; a further 19% 45-49 and only 6% being less than 45. The breakdown between activities is interesting. The self employment training (1-3 days) attracted 50% of its participants from those under 50 year olds. It also attracted more men than women, and an additional programme was launched in 2007 to encourage greater participation by women and those from ethnic minorities. The remaining activities all show over half of their participants were amongst the older group 50-60, with 89% over 50s taking part in the bespoke, return to work programme (WorkWise), where many were only recently unemployed having spent most of their lives in work.

3. The Profile of Participants

As previously indicated the profile of participants on SWOOP activities was highly diverse, and the levels of qualifications and periods of unemployment proved no exception to this. On the short programme for self employment there was a wide range of qualification level with 22% of those participating having achieved level 4/5 while 40% had no qualifications. As the programme had been aimed at the self diagnosed disabled it was not surprising that 45% of those attending had been unemployed for over 35 months. The level of difference between participants did create

³⁴ WorkWise, Exeter CVS & Action for Blind People

³⁵ SEESAM & It's About You

some difficulties in that it was not possible to offer a programme or level of support that met the needs of all those who attended. It also proved difficult to address the issue of self confidence in this programme when it was necessary to disavow some of the participant's self employment or start up business aspirations.

The career management programme had over 73% of participants with level 4/5 qualifications, and only 12% with no qualifications. Over 80% of those attending had been unemployed or economically inactive for less than a year. However this figure does include those who were still in work at the time of attending. The remaining 19% had been out of the workforce for over 35 months.

Where the participants were involved in a longer-term, more personalised approach as offered by two of the activities³⁶, this level of difference had little impact on the effectiveness of the provision. Of those attending the Workwise programme, a traditional IAG and 'job shop' approach, 42% were without qualifications, 20% with level 1 and less than 4% qualified to level 4. This programme worked effectively with the recently unemployed, 50% being unemployed for less than 6 months with a further 23% less than 11 months prior to joining the programme. The success of this programme was its ability to offer a bespoke provision, addressing issues of self confidence and self esteem, building confidence through work placements, providing training and building job hunting skills. Two key findings emerged from this action project. The first was the importance and value of putting in support in the first six months of unemployment, particularly for older people whose confidence and self esteem can erode quickly, the loss of which can lead to other issues, such as health problems. Statutory agencies such as the Jobcentre Plus do not generally offer support at this stage because newly unemployed are expected to find work again quickly (and often do but with possible subsequent 'churn'). The second, perhaps more surprising, finding was that older participants on this programme perceived themselves to be victims of age discrimination but this proved to be far less of an issue than their lack of ability to adequately represent their skills, experience and knowledge, whether in written form – applications and CVs – or face to face - in interview. Providing this type of support at the right time, to the appropriate level for the individual has led to many returning to employment.

Older people experiencing the most difficulty in rejoining the labour market are those with a range of other problems, poor health, and disability, social and personal difficulties. This group tended to be referred by Jobcentre Plus to our other flexible programme run by Exeter CVS. 56% of those taking part had been unemployed for over 35 months, with a further 6% between 24-35 months, leading to an average of 3 years unemployed by participants on this programme. However, over 40% of this group had qualification at level 4/5 with only 10% having no qualifications. Although highly qualified in terms of formal education, they lacked many other skills and abilities, and for a number of them a return to paid employment is always likely to remain a remote possibility. However, working with voluntary agencies has improved their situation, in terms of confidence and self esteem, and has provided an opportunity to engage with the world in a less challenging or threatening way than paid employment might present.

ePortfolio

The ePortfolio has been included as part of the SWOOP project to test one further method of supporting and facilitating self assessment and the effective representation of skills and experience. It was felt of particular interest to offer this to an audience of older people who might not necessarily have access to this type of reflection and assessment tool.

³⁶ WorkWise & Exeter CVS

Overview of ePortfolio

ePortfolio appears to be a term applied to a wide range of PC and online based tools, most obviously in within Further and Higher Education as an institution based tool for students to use for submitting assignments and evidencing their study. However an ePortfolio can be more than this:

- *‘... developmental (e.g., working), reflective (e.g., learning) and representational (e.g., showcase). A developmental ePortfolio, or ePortfolios or digital portfolios, are a record of things that the owner has done over a period of time, and may be directly tied to learner outcomes or rubrics.*
- *A representational ePortfolio shows the owner's achievements in relation to particular work or developmental goals and is, therefore, selective. The three main types may be mixed to achieve different learning, personal or work-related outcomes with the ePortfolio owner usually being the person who determines access levels.*

(Wikipedia, 2007)

The software selected for SWOOP is a generic internet based development. The project has chosen to focus on those aspects, such as interactive quizzes and tutorials, which produce statements about their skills and experience, often gained outside of formal qualifications. The statements allow the individual to reflect and consider the skills identified and how they might evidence them. The evidence can be in the form of documents, presentations audio clips or any other type of information that can be stored electronically within the system. This evidence can then be used to produce personal statements CV's action plans and individual learning plans.

Through a number of initial pilot sites and the use of the ePortfolio by the Skills and Learning projects it was apparent that the effectiveness of the ePortfolio was dependent on supported introduction through initial training, materials and possibly mentoring. The issues that emerged to inform this view included,

- Seeing the ePortfolio as a quick way of generating CVs and being uninterested or unprepared to value it as a reflective tool than needed a greater investment of time.
- The software was felt to be overcomplicated and difficult to navigate unsupported and this negated the users desire to explore it. This included those individuals who had good IT skills and were initially enthusiastic about using an IT product but became impatient with the operational problems.
- A lack of understanding about what the ePortfolio might contribute, both to the individual and to employers (involved in some of the piloting) as a result of insufficient planning, training and commitment at the introductory stage.
- In the two areas where individuals had access to one to one mentoring they were reluctant to use a product that they saw as distancing them from the personal approach, seeing the ePortfolio as replacing personal exchanges.

The subsequent training developed and now being delivered as an outreach programme presents ePortfolio as a ‘personal discovery’ for the client. The training programme comprises three ½ day sessions covering skills assessment; reflection and evidencing skills and preparation of CVs; and personal statements that can be adapted for job applications or personal development. Although the lack of IT skills were initially a perceived barrier to using the ePortfolio effectively, those with little or no IT skills seemed to benefit more from the experience as they treated this as a learning experience.

To ensure the lessons learnt in all piloting and in the outreach work are captured, a detailed evaluation process has been developed. The process allows for feedback from the outreach participants and will be summarise alongside a reflective journal kept by the trainer.

As with other areas of SWOOP, the following findings are emerging:

- Peer group training with a trainer of a similar age is preferred. The group dynamic is more effective particularly where people are able to share common experiences and support each other.
- The process of evaluation is proving effective and popular with the groups who wish to 'tell their story' and are enthusiastic about involvement with research into an innovative product.
- Emphasising ePortfolio as a tool for personal development and discovery has allowed it to be presented as non-threatening even for IT novices. The result has been that despite technical problems, the process and concept has been more readily accepted. Feedback has been about the progression and development of such a product rather than its drawbacks. The workshops have stimulated interest and demand for further development in job searching and of personal development.

The work undertaken to date on SWOOP indicates that an ePortfolio tool can be effective for an older person, but the level of effectiveness can be undermined at the introductory stage and in ongoing use if there is insufficient knowledgeable and appropriate support available to the user. Ensuring that the ePortfolio is 'right' and relevant for the user will improve its value, and encourage the investment of time and effort in it by the user.

Employers

The work with employers in the SW has been extensive, from awareness-raising to the training of intermediaries, and latterly specific work in company with a number of organisations. In addition to raising awareness of the new Age legislation, the project has provided information on demographic change and the potential impact this has on SW businesses. This information has been aimed at both companies and to regional decision making and policy setting organisations. Work continues in this area as a key part of the project's mainstreaming activities.

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Gender and Life Long Learning in Higher Education

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For about 20 years German universities have been open to older people. In Western Europe so called third age universities can be found at different places, while eastern European countries have different traditions.

Amongst all older people (at age of 50 and above), who take up these possibilities of learning in later life, up to 80% used to be women. Those women are changing both gender and age stereotypes by studying in later life and contribute with this practice to social change in society. New knowledge and learning experiences at the same time can broaden horizons in individual women opening new possibilities for societal participation.

The workshop will show results of two investigations with the same structured written questionnaire, one about all senior students in the University of Wuppertal up to 1996 and a second one about senior students studying between 1998 and 2005. The question has been, if learning in later life can be an emancipating way of life for older women (Sagebiel 2000, 2004, 2006). Emancipation is furthered by new forms of self reflection initiated by studying social sciences and humanities especially. Even though not preparing women for paid employment they experience new freedom and perspectives. To quote from the first research „I care for me in this education, only for me; during this time I became so egoistic (selfish) and the outcome is, that I now know definitely, what I don't want to do any longer“. This self-assurance could be found in the second project too, but from other questions it seemed that both gender had results not as contrasting. Men talked about more sensitivity. Family responsibilities hinder both form studying, sometimes, even though women a bit more. Both tell that they have become more a better understanding of the younger generation by studying social sciences.

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1 Introduction

In Germany about 50 universities (Saup 2001) offer an integrated study possibility for elder people. The concepts differ a lot, from offering entrance to regular lessons and seminars, with and without the possibility of making tests, up to integrated special institutions or associations in connection with the university which offer a special programme. But, senior studies normally don't refer to normal degree courses with regular exams, instead a less formalised study possibility. Nevertheless some structured study programmes offer a certificate at the end of studies (Sagebiel 2006). Integrated senior studies offer the possibility of intergenerational learning with special benefits and problems at the same time. The University of Wuppertal run such an integrated programme since 20 years successfully. But university reforms to adapt German university system to Bologna decisions can question these successes nowadays (Sagebiel 2006).

The question we seek to answer with this research is whether learning in later life can be an emancipating way of life for elderly both women and men. Results from qualitative observations and interviews, group discussions and a structured written questionnaire, given to all senior

students in University of Wuppertal twice, 1998 and 2005, are the empirical basis for answering this question (Sagebiel 2000, 2004, 2006).

In the history of learning in older life (Arnold 2000) the importance of senior studies is low, in comparison to learning in non university institutions. In Germany only 0.5% of the 60-85 old population (Kohli/Könemund 2000: 104) are senior students in universities.

2 State of the art

In the literature on seniors' studies, gender issues are mostly blended out (Kade 1997, 2001, Kaiser 1997, Schäffter 1997, Steinhoff 1997, Becker/Veelken/Wallraven 2000)³⁷.

On the other hand, *feminist studies* fail to consider the situation of elder women. Rather, almost all the research is concentrated on young and middle aged women (Herlyn/Vogel 1993). Also *feminist education research* (Metz-Göckel 1994) is biased in that elder women are rarely the subject or focus of their research. This results in a situation where you cannot find one single article on the subject of elder women's pursuit of higher education in two comprehensive German handbooks, "Women Education" (Giesecke 2001) and "Women' and Gender Studies" (Becker/Kortendiek 2004). The article on elder women and education (Kade 2001) refers to lower education outside the university.

Institutionalised further education of women has not only concentrated on middle aged women, but on professional usefulness contents (see Ketschau/Bruchhagen/Steenbuck 1993) rather than general scientific issues. Some research on elder women's pursuit of further education outside of universities does exist (Arnold/Füllgraf 1985, Caspers/ Füllgraf 1992, Notz 1997, Stadelhofer 1996, Wisselinck 1992). But in the handbook of education for elder people (Becker/Wallraven/Veelken 2000) only one article focus explicitly on gender (Sagebiel 2000). In order to theorise about elder women in education and their learning processes, *feminist gerontopedagogy*, *gerontological feminist education*, or cultural studies must begin interdisciplinary research in this important area.

Looking at the *learning process of students* from a feminist point of view, coeducational institutions are primarily to blame for the male dominated thinking and learning (Belenky u.a. 1989; Nölleke 1985) which, at the same time, has been described as gender neutral. During the last 20-30 years critics on *coeducation* have pointed out, that women in specialised areas, such as science, learn better in same sex learning situations (Metz-Göckel 1996).

Gerontology investigates age with most of all the focus on deficits, less potentials also with gender differences (Backes/Clemens 1998; Backes 2000, 2004), but neglecting the potential influence of education in older age. Baltes, a German gerontologist (Baltes u.a. 1996, S. 591), in a broad conceptualised Berliner study of old age, emphasises that elder women, as they age, have chances to live and learn in gender homogenous groups, in which they can behave more effectively and actively than in competitive situations with men. Therefore, such findings would imply that the Senior Studies program, integrated in co-educational learning in higher education, is not as "women friendly" as it could be if it was offered in gender homogenous groups.

Scientific Continuing education for older women whose needs have been satisfied in the last 25 years, have been investigated only since the last years (Arnold 1996; Köhler 2005; Sagebiel 2000, 2004a, 2004b, 2006, 2007; Sagebiel/Arnold 1998).

³⁷ The author tries since several years to put forward the gender perspective in reflection of senior's studies (see for instance Sagebiel 2000, 2004a, b, Sagebiel/Arnold 1998, Sagebiel/Sosna 1996). She also wrote in the "Handbook on Education in Older Life" (Becker/Veelken/Wallraven 2000) the only explicit article on this issue.

3 Concept of Senior Studies at the University of Wuppertal

The University of Wuppertal in the federal state of Northrhine-Westfalia has offered Seniors' Studies since 1987 for people interested in social sciences and humanities. There are no special requirements, neither about school exams nor about age. The only requirement is that interested people be highly motivated and willing to receive new knowledge and scientific perspectives. It could be said that they must also possess a high tolerance for frustration due the challenges of re-entering a life of scientific learning later in life. The Senior Studies program requires them to complete two selected subjects, learning together with young students in their lectures and seminars. There is a focus on social sciences like sociology, law, political science, social pedagogy, social psychology, statistics and economics. A second focus lies on selected humanities like history, pedagogy, philosophy, psychology, theology and sports. Senior students are expected to choose one subject from the social sciences and one from either the social sciences or humanities. These chosen subjects must be studied systematically in 2 ½ years and then they must prove their work successfully in the first and second circle. With 4 achievement controls in two subjects, they complete their studies with a small final thesis, and if successful, will receive a certificate from University of Wuppertal.

During the first two semesters, senior students are offered a special tutorial to learn scientific techniques and working methods. Issues of gender studies are integrated into this learning process during the first year, by which students have the opportunity to become aware of feminist science. This allows a chance for self-reflection upon their gendered life courses as well as how these issues may be perpetuated in the university learning processes.

4 Methodology of Research³⁸

The presented results are based on two evaluation projects 1996 to 1999 and 2005 to 2006 (replication study) which include all senior students, who have ever done the special senior course of studies in the University of Wuppertal for at least one semester. They were asked by a written questionnaire, which was mostly standardised with only a few open questions. In both times the answering rate was nearly the same 44% (124) and 46% (70), but whereas in the first sample 2/3 have been women, in the second more men than women were included. The answers were analysed with SPSS, a special statistical program for social science.

Another main source of data was personal observations of communication and behaviour of senior students during lessons, in which the author regularly gave special introductions to scientific methods. Interviews and consultations at the beginning of their studies completed the observations, along with several informal situations, which enabled interaction and communication.

³⁸ The first empirical study (1997 – 1999) was financed by the former ministry of work, health and social affairs in Nordrhein-Westfalia, meanwhile the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs, Women and Family. Authors of the report with analysis of results are Sabine Arndt, Annemarie Bopp-Schmehl and Felizitas Sagebiel (Arndt/Bopp-Schmehl/Sagebiel 1999). The second study (2005-2006) was financed by the University of Wuppertal. Tim Ebel prepared the survey and Jennifer Dahmen analysed the data, which had been prepared by student worker Monika Schmidtke.

5 Results and Interpretation³⁹

5.1 Social-Demographic Data

Most women participants were under the age of 60 (50%); from these, 25% were under 50; and 35% were between the ages of 60 and 69. In both studies the family status differs between women and men. 53% Women are married in comparison to (1998: 45%), while the percentage of married men is about the same, namely 90%. That means that 50 % of the women live alone. Women in senior studies have completed a lower level of education 1998 and 2005.

5.2 Obstacles to Studying of Elder People

Obstacles to the study are gendered: 1998 most of all voluntary work hindered men, while 2005 family duties (50%), while women were hindered still more by these reasons (70%). Voluntary work now is a bigger problem for studying women than for men (36.7% in comparison to 26.3% of the men). Instead men are hindered 2005 in the same amount by their hobbies like women by voluntary tasks.

1998 the most impressive result was that the 45% of married women students, questioned, answered, that their possibilities to study freely were often obstructed by their husbands and by the gendered role expectations of their families. They reported that they often had to struggle to have time and room for themselves. 2005, less than ten years later difficulties with the husband are no longer a study hindrance. In contrast to the married women, 1998 as well as 2005 the married male senior students (90%) reported feeling free to study in the university.

But women 1998 were discouraged not only by family expectations. Their own reflections on obstacles to learning revealed that they also felt discouraged by same-aged women in their social network (1998: 50% and 2005: 27,5%). New interests, modified social attitudes (30.8%), and less time for contacts (24.4%) often lead to conflicts with previous reference persons and groups. At the same time, new contacts with same-aged women and younger people are developed. Studying older men seem to be accepted by same sex and same-aged people.

An explanation for the contradictory effects of marital status lies in different gendered family roles as a result of life-long gender roles, which are the consequence of a life-long gender-hierarchical division of labour. When attempting to resolve their experienced role conflicts, between their husbands and children on one side, and their expectations to live and learn for their own benefit on the other, they are forced into a polarity of “stopping of studying“ or ”separation from their husbands“ (Sagebiel 2004b). 36% of the women indicated, on the questionnaire, that they continue studying in spite of opposition and conflicts. These attitudes demonstrate that they have finished living their lives for others. Overall study obstacles reflect a traditional gendered hierarchy. The burden of responsibilities for home work have equalized for men and women. But, 90 % of the women tell that they are responsible for most of the tasks at home, whereas only 27% of the men think this. Also the time spent with family and care responsibilities is still higher for women.

5.3 Interest in Subjects and Gendered Modes of Studying

In the first study, women and men most frequently choose sociology, history, and political science, but women tend to select subjects that are most applicable to their own lives. Women prefer to study psychology and philosophy. Both women and men appear to be working hard to do their best in the disciplines and subjects they are studying. In second evaluation men and women focus their interests on the same subjects: history, politics, philosophy, sociology and law. Additionally women take literature and theology.

³⁹ Parts of the results are published in Sagebiel 2006 and 2007.

Participating observations, however, reveal gendered differences in performance during the lessons. The female mode of learning concentrates as much on achievement in subject matters as on creating a communicative learning atmosphere, while men concentrate solely on their own performance. Although interviews and observations have shown that women and men often suffer from similar learning difficulties, men seldom talk of any learning problems or weaknesses while women demonstrate a willingness to reflect upon their perceived limitations.

The new study shows that women now felt discussion with younger students less easy, also they told they would participate less actively and only would listen. But now, also men talk about difficulties with written papers like women more easily.

5.4 Change processes

Considering the struggles for learning space and education it is not surprising that a third of the women in the first study report more awareness of their role as women and nearly half think that they now know more about social structured gender relations. Therefore, 20% are critical of their past life in comparison to only 10% of the male students.

As a result of pursuing education in the later years of life, women 1998 had gained more competencies (skills) in conversations and often become more active as advisers in their reference groups. In broadening their knowledge, women become more critical on society and achieve greater emancipation.

They learn more about themselves, become more self-confident, become more aware of their emotions, and begin to develop a new identity. Learning provides a vehicle for public visibility and, at the same time, offers the opportunity to test the limits of their own possibilities and megalomania in reality.

In the 2005 gender differences of studying in later life had changed, perhaps because of changing cohorts of older students. Now men talked about changing processes which had been told before by women. Both learned new competencies (60%), become more aware of their wishes and emotions (25%). 1998 more women than men had told "I now know better my emotions and my wishes" (35.9 % of women in comparison to 29 % of men). Interesting is that 2005 men talk about changing processes which traditionally would have been defined for women, they became more openly (57.9% in comparison to 42.9% of the women), feel more physiological and psychological wellness. They became more aware of their own limits (55.3% in comparison to 28.6% of the women). Also they became unsure about their own values changed (18.4% in comparison to 3.6% of the women).

A Gender difference which remains is the self-confidence gained through study. More women than men talked about their increased self-confidence (46.4% in comparison to 28.9% of the men). Their independence has grown (28.6% in comparison to 5.3% of the men) and they are more conscious about their gender role. In the first study housewives were the "winners" in self-confidence and reported more independence as a result of the Senior's Studies program. The following quotations from the first study offer a clear impression of the emancipative impact which learning in later life has had on the women senior students. These women's voices speak of their new orientation:

„I had a long apprenticeship, I could not say I. Now I can say I very well“.

„I care for me in this education, only for me; during this time I became so egoistic (selfish) and the outcome is, that I now definitely know, what I don't want to do any longer“.

„You have to do things in seniors' studies only for yourself, not for anyone else“.

„ After all I want to meet (satisfy) my ambition and to stop being defined above others – as daughter, wife, mother.“

„I open my mind and I work completely selfish. I have something only for myself, something very fantastic (terrific), and I can tell about it“.

Because the proportion of house wives decreased in the second study these results are not so obvious any more.

Intergenerational learning in seniors' studies offers new possibilities of understanding different generations. In the first study, 60% of the female senior students reported more positive attitudes and more tolerance towards the younger people. 2005 senior students, both, men and women talk about a better understanding of needs and problems of the younger generation through social science knowledge (over 70 %). Half of the student said 1998 and 2005, that they have become more tolerant to other people.

5.5 Critical Reflection of Traditional Volunteer Roles of older people

Another mode of emancipation for elder women is to participate in volunteer work, yet in more non-traditional ways. One focus of the empirical study was to investigate what students actually did before they began Seniors' Studies in the university and how the focus, contents, and ways of volunteer employment was impacted by newly acquired knowledge and opportunities for self-reflection.

Whereas Results of the study show, that the impact of Senior's Studies on volunteer work was proportionally higher for women students in the second study attitude towards voluntary work and change processes by senior studies did not differ so much between men and women.

In the first study women talked about their wishes to gain personal development in voluntary jobs. This is now more important for men (31.4% in comparison 16% for women). Less hierarchy between leading and executive tasks is now more important for women (34.3% in comparison to 12% for women). Both genders want to have pleasure while doing voluntary work, women a bit more (80% in comparison to 71.4% for men).

6 Conclusions

The conclusions can be summarized on three different levels: the emancipative potential of further education in older age, the need for interdisciplinary research which combines older age, gender, education, and learning style together with theoretical thinking of interdependencies, and the political and social implications including future demographic development.

First of all, personal development and emancipation appear to be realistic aims for elder people, women and men, and academic education has proven to be an important factor. More freedom from the expectations of others – especially for family wives – together with the acquisition of new knowledge allows elder people to move to a concentration on their own life goals and aspirations. Hopefully, new freedoms, experiences, and an enthusiasm for learning can broaden the horizon for many of these women and men and, therefore, lead to a form of emancipation.

Secondly, research and theory must begin to examine the education of elder people with a focus on gender, including characteristics of people who look for further education, content of scientific issues, and learning styles and didactics.

In addition to the personal advantages that accompany an elder people's newly acquired knowledge and competency, there are also many societal benefits. Demographic prognostic data from nearly all European countries show, that the number of elder people will continue to grow and, at the same time, monetary resources for social services will decline. Life long learning for elder people can increase societal potential by allowing them to become less dependent (financially and emotionally) as well as offering them greater potential to work towards solving societal problems. Therefore, society should help to legitimize education in the later life.

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KULTURKONTAKT AUSTRIA - A KEYWORD APPROACH TO ARTS EDUCATION

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Abstract

Since 1998 “KulturKontakt Austria” is using a special approach in its project-work, to initiate learning processes by so called “excluded audiences” (which also includes seniors) in cultural institutions like museums and exhibitions.

‘Keyword’ approach:

Many terms are used to describe the process of assisting others to learn, e.g. intermediary, guide, volunteer, advocate, animator, facilitator, mediator. Combined to methodology ways to open museums and other cultural institutions to audiences, which don’t find an easy access, the word “keyworker” is used more and more.

Keyworker are either professionals or volunteers not employed by a museum (or another cultural institution), who act as mediators between the institution and a wide and representative adult public (in this case: seniors). They broaden the mediator role, therefore, by contributing from both professional and wide ranging community backgrounds. In this, they are distinctive – they are people who can help to open the door between audiences and museum/cultural institution.

Keyworker act across sectors in support of learning for adults in general, and culturally excluded groups in particular. They make a varied and valuable contribution to the process of cultural development. They bring knowledge, skills, experience and resources that cultural institutions and staff in general do not have. To differing degrees they also bring their networks, a potentially important means by which access can be achieved and partnership developed.

Keyworkers have influence and responsibilities that are recognised by the target audiences cultural institutions seek to reach. They understand the barriers to access – such as cost, cultural differences, poor educational experience, literacy difficulties, language barriers, peer pressure and low self-image experienced by many adults. They share some of the goals of cultural institutions like museums and are willing to learn about, and contribute to, the role and functions of cultural institutions: they are aware of being learners themselves.”

Roman Schanner

The keyword-approach and examples of the project work in Vienna (for example “culture on wheels”) by powerpoint-presentation.

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PRACTICAL EXAMPLES, MODELS AND CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AND COOPERATION BETWEEN SENIORS OF DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Ralph Schneider, ZAWiW, University of Ulm

The Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education, in short - ZAWiW, of Ulm University, Germany and its institutional partners, the association ILEU and the network ViLE e.V., cooperated in and also coordinated several European projects in the field of education of older adults. Communication and cooperation, face-to-face and virtual, played a central role within these projects. Crucial role played here in the new media, which offers a wide range of possibilities for intercultural communication.

The key issues, challenges and problems of international communication and cooperation, technical, didactic and methodic, will be presented and examined on examples of concrete projects. Discussed will be the benefits of such international activities and the prerequisites needed for them to take place. It will also be shown, how cooperation between seniors who live in different countries and who speak different languages developed and what it had meant for the learners.

Ralph Schneider is a pedagogue who has worked for three years at ZAWiW as a scientific assistant. He worked as a project co-ordinator in model projects like “senior online editors”. Where e-learning possibilities for senior citizens were tested and their social participation was developed. Since autumn 2006 he has been working for the European project “SeniorLearning”. www.zawiw.de

Practical examples, models and challenges of international communication and cooperation between seniors of different countries

In nearly every European country the proportion of population aged 65 or over has grown in the last years (see Eurostat, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>). The progressive ageing of the population will continue. By 2025, there will be on average less than three people of working age for each elderly person (see: Third report on economic and social cohesion, <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/g24006.htm>). The number of members of the EU has grown up to 27 members, some further countries expect membership. All this causes social changes. The discussion about the European constitution shows: the development of the European Union is not an easy process. There are rapid developments in science and technology, too – a digital divide can be stated: the access of seniors to the ICT is low [see: Christophe Demunter, Statistik kurz gefasst 38/2005 : Die digitale Kluft in Europa. Eurostat (Hg.)]. Also Globalisation plays an important role. The example of climate change shows meaningfully challenges for everyday life. All age groups are affected, they have to process a greater amount of information, cope with changes and critical situations and they must make more decisions. For this reason lifelong learning is not a privilege but a must. And it is an important reason for senior citizens for international communication and cooperation with other older adults. Furthermore it is a chance for senior citizens to participate in social developments. They also can provide their competences, enhance their skills and knowledge.

Another good reason: Senior citizens in Europe are interested in journeys, education, foreign cultures and languages and in meeting people from other countries.

Nevertheless the group of seniors is heterogeneous. They are different in education and interests, in health, mobility and social situation as well as in competences and life experiences. Educational offers must take this into account choosing subjects and methods.

ZAWiW (Centre for General Scientific Continuing Education, Ulm University; Germany, <http://www.zawiw.de>) has developed and conducted several learning courses and projects for seniors in the area of international communication and cooperation. ZAWiW cooperates with ILEU („Institute for virtual and real learning in the area of adult education at the University of Ulm e.V.”, <http://www.ileu.net>) and the association “Virtual and real learning and competence network of older adults (ViLE) e.V.” (<http://www.vile-netzwerk.de>).

There are different offers. Introductory courses and seminars lead in the learning field “Europe”. A one week lasting seminar took place in February 2004 with participants from all over Germany, but with some Polish guests as well to get their point of view. Topic was “Opening up Europe – on the way to a united Europe” (<http://www.uni-ulm.de/LiLL/4.0/D/more-infos/sem2004>). It included subjects like Europe as a cultural area, Europe in the information age, democratisation of the EU, eastward enlargement. Methods have been lectures, discussions, study groups, but also a video conference to build a bridge to other European senior students on the one hand and to show possibilities of the new media for cooperation purposes. Another method was a European party with “famous Europeans” presented by the participants. In February/March 2006 one more one week lasting seminar was held about “home Europe – migration, cultural identity, transcultural competence”. Political, cultural and economic reasons for migration were presented and the mentioned terms were highlighted. A method was the invitation of people with migrant background who reported about their life experiences. Another kind of leading in the learning field Europe is the participation in the e-learning course “Europ@ Online”, held in cooperation with the Federal state of Baden-Württemberg’s centre for political education (<http://www.lpb-bw.de>). The course’s contents in 2004 was the eastward enlargement of the EU and the elections of the European parliament. In 2007 the main question was if a constitution for the EU is necessary. An important part of the e-learning course is always the introduction to the virtual learning platform as well. For the course in 2007 the learning management system “Moodle” was used, which supports collaborative work in learners groups and integrates materials, discussion forums, a chat room, exercises. In all courses and seminars the interest of the participants for Europe advanced. Some of them have taken part in courses and projects which are mentioned below.

There have been several projects which were sponsored by the European Union’s Socrates / Grundtvig programme. An overview can be found on ZAWiW’s website (www.uni-ulm.de/uni/fak/zawiw/europa/en). Here some examples are presented.

One of the first using the new media was “SoLiLL – Self-organised learning in later life” (2000-2002). The central idea of this two year project was the initiation of autonomous learning groups of older people in various locations in Europe (the Netherlands, Spain, France, Italy, the Czech Republic and Germany) with the inclusion of the new communication and information technologies. The project focused especially on older adults who are interested in continuing education. Within the framework of an inter-generational approach also other age groups could be included (project website: http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/solill/index_html?language=en). The project’s goals were to test and compare self-determined forms of learning under the various national conditions and educational traditions, to demonstrate the potential of the new communication technologies for cross-national co-operation in such groups and to test the applicability of the new possibilities for creative expression and presentation in overcoming language barriers. Subjects have been eating culture (bread) and housing / living spaces. The teams researched locally and presented and discussed their results using the Internet.

Another project of joint learning and meeting was “TownStories” (2002-2005, <http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/townstories>). Participants came from seven European towns from Italy, Spain, the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Germany. Object was to show foreign people the own home city from an individual point of view. This was achieved by creative writing of texts about different aspects of life, which were prepared for the Internet. The texts were translated into the other project languages by translator teams in each partner country and the translations were also built in the website. They also were presented during partner meetings, where also specially designed guided tours were made. Ideas of learning through research with inclusion of the learners in decision-making processes, time-witness and biographical writing approaches, tandem language learning and translating were included in the project as well. Also skills for the use of the Internet were trained during partner meetings. Communication (including monitoring the project’s progress) between partner meetings was arranged by personal emails, two mailinglists, chat and discussion forum. In addition to outcomes like increased interest in and knowledge of the partner countries, languages, culture and people, like acquisition of new skills as writing, research, foreign language competences and communication over the Internet, like the opening of new fields of activities new and lasting contacts and friendships developed themselves.

A third project was “ODE – Open Doors for Europe” in which seniors from Poland, Spain, Italy and Germany took part (2004-2006, <http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/ode>). The background for ODE was the experience that seniors often don’t speak foreign languages even if this knowledge would facilitate accessing other countries and cultures. ODE was a learning partnership to find new instruments, so called door openers for Europe. These are the base for communication and include knowledge about key situations, different themes, basic words, rituals, songs, day-to-day manners. Actions and methods have been partner meetings to get to know the learning partners, to discuss strategies and working plans, to conduct working groups. But they also were social and cultural events. There also have been working groups between the partner meetings who developed, tested and translated materials about different subjects, who prepared texts for the website. They also participated in language and pc courses as the skills for the use of the ICT (in this case the common website, emails and a mailinglist, a discussion forum) couldn’t be taken for granted. Using the ICT was a part of the learning process. They supported the project and the informal contacts of the participants. Results of the project like materials about communication, everyday life, eating and drinking, stereotypes, taboos are shown on the website in different languages. Unfortunately the project couldn’t be finished as planned as the EU didn’t support it for the third year. But nevertheless the partners decided to continue working on the subject and took part in a journey to Eastern Germany in October 2006.

Some Polish and German seniors who were participants of the ODE project took part in an eight weeks lasting new e-learning course which was developed again in cooperation with the Federal state of Baden-Wurtemberg’s centre for political education. Subject was “Intercultural Learning”. It was moderated by a German woman, in cooperation with a Polish woman who translated the materials on the website into Polish. Again the learning platform “Moodle” was used. After its introduction there have been weekly exercises to lead in acceptance and comprehension for a foreign culture. They were about self-perception and perception by others, how Polish people live in Germany and Germans in Poland, about dropping a brick and about Polish-German cooperation over the Internet. At last the course was finished by an evaluation. A basic principle was the cooperative work by learning Polish-German tandems. They discussed via forums and email. The common language was German, because the Polish partners had good German skills. The participants described the course as gainful.

Another form of intercultural exchange offers the method “research by travelling” (overview: <http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/vile-netzwerk/Reisen>). It includes active research of the culture and history of a country or a town as well as meetings with foreign people and the research of

oneself. It requires the readiness to exchange with strangers and the joy to discover foreign things and oneself. Journeys which normally last some days were made to foreign countries like Russia or Italy. There the participants met other seniors, who showed their guests how they live their everyday life (work, family, culture, environment,...) and discussed with them different attitudes. The preparation of the journey is supported by a website. Seniors who have learned to use HTML report about their experiences on self-made websites (e.g. a report about the journey to Sardinia 2006: <http://www.gemeinsamlernen.de/vile-netzwerk/Reisen/Sardinien06/bericht06/index.html>) which also document the sustainable impression of the journeys. At the same time seniors designing websites are role models for those who didn't use the ICT this way.

To resume the topic of international cooperation between seniors: There is a necessity for exchange between seniors as well as there are interests of older adults to communicate and work together with other European senior citizens. Learning projects, courses and seminars support them. But there are barriers, too. Especially insufficient knowledge of languages and intercultural differences, also different conceptions of time, different financial means, different interests in projects and lack of technical competences can be stated.

Experiences show, that fostering communication, getting to know each other and creating a feeling of togetherness during meetings is important to solve cultural and language problems (for example by playful introductions, activities like singing common songs ("Are you sleeping, brother John" / "Frère Jacques" / "Bruder Jakob" / ...). Groups of communicators should be found which consist of interpreters, speakers, translators and deputies (in case of absence). The use of communication over the Internet and translations tools should become usual, not only for the participation in projects but for everyday life as well to face the challenges of the knowledge society in which the ICT play an important role. Project's websites should contain introductions of the team as well and everybody should get used to the ICT by introduction to the technical possibilities and their application.

The subjects themselves like language and cultural barriers can be picked as central themes in courses and projects. As regards ZAWiW's experiences the learners should be involved actively in the project: the methodical orientation is "down – up", what means the focus is on the participant, on the process and on the partnership. Partners treat themselves equally.

To solve financial problems the Lifelong Learning Programme (Grundtvig) of the European Union's Education Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency or national Socrates agencies may be asked for grants (http://eacea.cec.eu.int/static/en/llp/index_en.htm).

ZAWiW runs Grundtvig introductory courses called "Manager for virtual learning projects in seniors' education in Europe" for persons in charge and facilitators. It is intended for those who wish to apply the new information and communication media in seniors' education and want to become acquainted with virtual learning working platforms. Information: <http://www.uni-ulm.de/uni/fak/zawiw/seminare/en>. The next one will probably take place in autumn 2007. It contains an introductory phase over the Internet, a one week lasting presence stage at Ulm University (Germany) and a post-processing phase, again over the Internet.

The exchange of European institutions of continuing education of the third age and other organisations is supported by the network "Learning in Later Life", which was founded in 1995 was a direct result of the European Expert meeting "Competence and Productivity in the Third Age". The website for further information: <http://www.lill-online.net>

The represented institutions within the LiLL-network may be your partner for an international communication and cooperation project for senior citizens. A LiLL-conference "web4seniors" will take place in October 2007 in Ulm.

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MAKING THEATRE FROM MEMORIES

Pam Schweitzer

Director of European Reminiscence Network
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Abstract

This paper will focus on the creation of public performance from their own memories by older learners with no prior experience of the performing arts. It will explore how older people find and express common values and celebrate difference through sharing their life experiences across class and cultural divides. It will demonstrate how the exploration of individual and common memories through improvisation with skilled professional facilitation can generate new theatrical forms requiring of the group previously undeveloped skills. A holding structure to contain their different stories and to shape them into a coherent whole emerges through a series of improvisation sessions. The older people rehearse and perform the resulting scripts which voice their memories, hopes, fears, joys and regrets, putting their individual lives into a wider social and historical context and enabling them to be seen as participants in the making of history rather than its victims.

New confidence and self-esteem grows from the development of new performance skills and from positive responses of audiences of all ages, who are entertained and educated by these shows. The new confidence generated leads the older learners in all sorts of new directions related to self-expression and communication in the wider world. Involvement in international projects has enabled older learners to travel overseas and work with their counterparts in other European countries. The presentation will be illustrated with extracts from performances.

Pam Schweitzer MBE directs the European Reminiscence Network, lecturing and training in reminiscence work. For 23 years until 2005 she was Artistic Director of the Age Exchange Theatre Trust - the first dedicated company to tour reminiscence theatre across the UK and Europe. She is an Honorary Fellow of Greenwich University. www.pamschweitzer.com

INTRODUCTION:

Reminiscence involves some or all of the following:

- * Processing life experience
- * Reflecting back over a lifetime of events and transitions
- * Recollecting and focusing on key moments in one's life
- * Thinking back on important relationships
- * Taking stock

It is something we do all the time, more or less consciously as new events occur in our lives and we process them in the light of our experience to date.

It is a particularly significant activity as we grow older and as our need increases to put our life into some kind of perspective and understand it as an entirety.

Reminiscence Work implies doing the same things, but with intention and structure, usually with at least one other person and often in a group, meeting on a regular basis with a purpose. That purpose may be education, social, therapeutic or culturally based.

Creative Reminiscence Work, as I shall use the term in this article, involves doing the above, but developing the memories located by an individual or a group in the present through arts-based processes. This will probably involve the learning and development of new skills, which extend capacity for self-expression and communication.

Often this work produces a shareable end-product through which others, who were not involved in the original reminiscence process, can have access to those memories. This end-product, whether it be a piece of theatre, dance or visual art, can stimulate the memories of those others, increase their understanding and generate learning.

I shall describe two approaches, one through visual art and one through the creation of original theatre pieces to illustrate this approach.

HERE ARE SOME REASONS FOR DOING REMINISCENCE WORK

Community building - sharing memories with others from a similar background generates a strong sense of belonging to a community and having a valued role within it

Combating isolation - loss of partners and close friends in later life can lead to isolation and withdrawal. Reminiscence offers a means of inclusion in a desirable social group which shares a common life experience

Friendship - pleasurable contact through sharing common memories can become the basis for new friendships between participants in the present

Finding perspective - having an opportunity to share and reflect on one's experience of life in a supportive atmosphere increases people's sense of identity, their sense of who they are. It helps people to integrate the different parts of their life into a more meaningful whole

A sense of history - sharing stories with people of the same generation or with much younger people helps to develop a sense of oneself as a participant in the great social and historical upheavals of the last century

Respect - in reminiscence everyone is the expert on his or her own life and is recognised as an individual with unique experience to impart

Stimulation - being in a group where the memories are shared can stimulate the recall of long-forgotten experiences and put participants back in touch with parts of their lives which are pleasurable to remember

Psychological support - where memories are painful, it can be helpful to find others who can relate to one's own past struggles, so one does not have to feel so alone in suffering

Cultural integration - reminiscence is also a means of celebrating difference, bringing communities with different racial, cultural and religious backgrounds together to exchange life experience

Empowerment - reminiscence work with people with special needs, and especially older people with dementia, can help to build self-confidence and independence by concentrating on strengths and creating opportunities for success

Creativity - encouraging people to explore their memories through creative activities is pleasurable for participants and entertaining for anyone with whom they may wish to share their results.

ESSENTIAL REMINISCENCE SKILLS AND QUALITIES

Some of the essential skills listed below may sound so obvious that they don't need pointing out. It is true that some people are 'naturals' when it comes to engaging with older people and valuing

their memories, but it is necessary to practise and develop these essential skills to use them purposely and in a planned way.

good listening skills: be very attentive to what each speaker is saying, showing that you are 'there' for them, and do not rush to prompt or question

receptiveness: relax, and show in your body language, including eye contact, that you are pleased to be listening and that you are interested and value what is being said

curiosity: you need to have a genuine desire to know more and to learn from the older people, especially as they will be very quick to stop reminiscing if they feel you are bored or doing this work out of duty

sensitivity: make yourself receptive to the feelings which the speaker is revealing as well as the content, especially where a painful memory may have been triggered, and guard against questioning which may be experienced as intrusive

an accepting attitude: do not judge the person remembering, but rather show that you have heard and understood what they said and respect their point of view

a reasonable memory: you must be able to recall what has been said and be able to refer back to it, in order to make the person remembering feel it is worthwhile talking to you, and so you can make links between different stories

a sense of humour: you need be able to create an easy atmosphere, sharing the funny side of things remembered, and delighting in the unexpected and bizarre

adaptability: you must be willing to change plans quickly and 'go with' the interests and needs expressed by the person, or the group, without making them feel that you have no sense of direction yourself

imagination: some people find that talking is more difficult than other means of communication, such as drawing, singing, dancing, showing, etc, so you need to provide many possibilities for creative expression of memories

When working with a group, there are additional requirements:

clarity: be clear about the group's purpose and objectives and make sure people know and accept them, including practical aspects such as the number and duration of sessions, where they will be held and when

a democratic approach: everyone's contributions must be valued and the time available to the group must be shared

group work skills: there are always links and connections between what different group members say, however different their backgrounds may be. Good facilitation involves pointing up these links for the group and creating a sense of shared experience and common ground

caring: there is a responsibility to take care of the emotional needs of group members, ensuring that each person is welcomed individually. If someone is distressed, time should be made for them to talk (if necessary after the session) and extra help made available if required

practicality: the physical needs of the group must be considered, so that everyone can hear and see everyone else in the session. People who are hard of hearing should be seated near or opposite the group leader. The room for reminiscing should be quiet, warm, well lit and undisturbed.

Wherever possible, it is desirable to include in the reminiscence sessions care staff, volunteers and any others who may be looking after the group members.

PLANNING A SERIES OF REMINISCENCE SESSIONS

Themes and topics:

Some themes are particularly fruitful to explore with groups, and many activities attached to the chapters that follow focus on these themes

Childhood games and pastimes	Family life and grandparents
Food and cooking	School days
Ambitions and dreams	Starting work
Courting days	Entertainment and fashion
Weddings	Having babies and bringing up a family
Festivals, rituals, special occasions, weekends	Significant journeys, holidays and travel
Wartime memories (but this is not appropriate for everyone)	

Multi-sensory triggers:

Whatever the theme, it is important to offer different types of sensory stimulation in order to help people remember. Objects familiar to group members from earlier days are a good starting point and they can stimulate many senses. For example, an old hand-made shopping basket will have a smell, a texture, a design, a weight when empty and full, a physical association with carrying and shopping, and a taste connection with food purchased in the past in markets and shops. Objects also have different associations for different people, so that comparing one person's memory of going shopping with someone else's will be a way of conjuring up their different backgrounds and communities.

Often objects provide a more relaxing starting point than questions, provided they are chosen with care and are culturally appropriate to the group members. Here are some of the sources of stimulation, which can help to make reminiscence sessions varied and enjoyable:

Sight: photos, films, paintings and colours, maps, flags and symbols, diagrams, technical drawings, posters, skies, growing things

Sounds: songs, familiar and unfamiliar music, bird and animal sounds, weather (storms, wind, rain), sounds of trains and ships, machinery noise

Words: place names, famous people, stories, scandals, proverbs and poems

Tastes: food, drink, sweets, medicine, cooking and baking, unusual or foreign foods to try, old recipes remembered from childhood

Smell: medicine, perfume, make-up, cleaning agents, mothballs, herbs, spices, cooking smells, flowers, trees and countryside smells, coal and wood burning

Touch: contrasting textures, contrasting temperatures (warm and cold), different fabrics, human touch, food ingredients, animals to stroke, babies to cuddle, clothes to handle and fold

Movement: games, dance, mime, greetings, gestures, work movements such as typing, sewing, lifting, digging, religious rituals

DEALING WITH PAINFUL ISSUES

Fear of raising these issues can inhibit workers who may wish to undertake reminiscence work. They may feel that they are not adequately prepared to deal with the "fall-out" from such

discussions and that it is safer to avoid them. However, reminiscence sessions can provide a valuable opportunity for group members to share some of these painful feelings with others who are familiar with them and who can empathise. This sharing often helps to reduce the burden for the elders of coping with such feelings alone and provides much-needed support for individuals. In this sense, reminiscence is not just about sharing the past, but very much about coping with the present and facing the future

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEMORIES:

Use of objects to stimulate memories:

Handling items from the past, such as a candle in a holder, a dip-in pen, a pair of 'bloomers' (big old-fashioned knockers!) or a fur stole, can stimulate memories and enable participants to show what they remember about how these items were used or worn.

the objects should be arranged thematically around subjects such as schooldays, washday, courting, marriage, the seaside and so on

the older people should be encouraged to use the equipment while talking about their past experience as the weight, texture, feel, shape and smell of the object can often trigger memories

regional and generational differences arise according to how objects were customarily used and this can stimulate discussion between group members

it is enjoyable to create a story as a group in which every object on show is used, and it does not matter if the story is a little bit chaotic as long as everyone feels they can join in and enjoy the exercise

objects are effective means of sensory stimulation, physical sensation and related memories of younger days

Dramatic improvisation as a natural means of exploring memory:

Although improvisation might seem to be a very alien activity for older people in a care home to engage in, in fact it has proved to be a very helpful means of bringing the past to life in the present. It provides a very natural and easy way of finding and expressing their memories, with the added benefit of social interaction and engagement. Some of the most animated sessions emerge from the imaginative playing out of "as if" situations. It is important to note that:

"scenes" can be very short indeed to be effective and just a few sentences exchanged in role can lift the atmosphere in a reminiscence session

acting out of memories can be fun and give rise to much humour and creativity in the group and it usually raises the energy level in the group

by entering into remembered situations and performing them as though they are happening again now, we can help the older people to retrieve knowledge, competence and confidence

the older people have few opportunities to shine and be the centre of attention, but in these short dramatic re-enactments each can have his or her "moment" and be "the star"

applauding people's efforts confirms their status and sense of success and helps to build group feeling

because these "moments" are unusual and special, they are also memorable, and can be referred back to in subsequent sessions to give a sense of continuity and achievement

A short entertainment of stories and songs recalled by the group:

Preparing an event of this kind is another way of strengthening positive feelings about the group and offering an opportunity for sharing with a wider audience

some solo stories for confident members of the group to retell to a slightly larger audience

some songs for the group to perform all together, especially songs with associated memories from younger days

a spoken duet between two group members who have discovered that they have similar memories of a particular event or time

a compère or link person to prompt the performers, and this could be the reminiscence group leader or another group member.

Improvised scenes by the group made from the stories they have shared:

Some groups enjoy recreating a memory, playing it out as though it is happening now in the present. This approach is becoming more popular as groups realise what fun this can be, and that no previous acting experience is required. The facilitator invites the group to “demonstrate how it was.” The process of preparation must not be too pressured and the spirit must be one of co-operation and celebration

three or four short sequences around a common theme can give “the flavour” of the time the older people are remembering

the scenes can remain improvised, so that people do not get nervous about learning lines and so that the spontaneity of the performance is preserved

sad stories can be included as well as happy or comic items, and this helps participants feel they are presenting a more rounded picture

the scenes can be linked by choruses of well-known songs with a relevant theme to help the group move easily from one scene and one mood to another

Devising, rehearsing and performing original pieces of theatre from memories:

This paper will focus on the creation of public performance from their own memories by older learners with no prior experience of the performing arts. It will explore how older people find and express common values and celebrate difference through sharing their life experiences across class and cultural divides.

It will demonstrate how the exploration of individual and common memories through improvisation with skilled professional facilitation can generate new theatrical forms requiring of the group previously undeveloped skills.

A holding structure to contain their different stories and to shape them into a coherent whole emerges through a series of improvisation sessions. The older people rehearse and perform the resulting scripts which voice their memories, hopes, fears, joys and regrets.

The resulting play puts their individual lives into a wider social and historical context and enables them to see themselves, and be seen by others, as participants in the making of history, rather than its passive recipients or its victims.

New confidence and self-esteem grows from the development of new performance skills and from positive responses of audiences of all ages, who are entertained and educated by these shows. The new confidence generated leads the older learners in all sorts of new directions related to self-expression and communication in the wider world. Involvement in international projects has enabled older learners to travel overseas and work with their counterparts in other European countries.

New theatre productions by ethnic elders around their own life histories have increased their profile in their local communities, nationally and internationally.

The presentation will be illustrated with extracts from performances.

Life Portraits: The making and sharing of Memory Boxes across Europe:

I shall outline an international co-operation project entitled “Making Memories Matter” which began in 2004 and is whose products are still touring across Europe. Seven countries co-operated in the making of 120 Memory Boxes for a joint travelling exhibition. The Memory Boxes were

created in old grenade boxes supplied by the armies in each country as a means of marking the 60th anniversary of the end of hostilities in Europe.

Each Memory Box was the result of a co-operation between a professional artist and an older person. Over an intensive period of six 2-hour meetings, the older learner's life story was explored with the artist, including an examination of photos and artefacts with particular significance for those individuals. The artist then worked with the older learner to create a visual representation of the key story or stories chosen to represent his or her life.

A short accompanying text gave a brief biography of the older person and some reflections on the process of making the box by both parties. These texts were translated into all the languages of the project, so that when the resulting combined exhibition visited each country, visitors could learn about one another's lives. This enabled those who visited the exhibition to hear about the lives of many older people in other countries, especially about the major events in their lives, including migration, involvement in war and enemy occupation as well as more personal themes.

A book featuring large colour photographs of the Memory Boxes from all participating countries, together with texts about the contents of the boxes and their meanings to the older people, and something about their life histories. The exhibition and the book have been produced by the project and have acted as a spur to artists and older people in other countries to try communicating their lives visually in this way.

It has been a source of great pride to all the older exhibitors that their Memory Boxes have travelled far and wide and been admired and understood in 12 countries across Europe. Examples of the Memory Boxes will be shown and also a film demonstrating the process of Memory Box making by older people and artists.

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Making Memories Matter published 2005 by euregioverlag available from Pam Schweitzer via Schweitzer@beeb.net

Mapping Memories: reminiscence with ethnic minority elders published 2004 by Age Exchange

Reminiscing with People with Dementia published 1999 by Age Exchange

Biographical note:

Pam Schweitzer has spent the last 25 years developing reminiscence arts work, especially original reminiscence theatre productions, both professional and amateur, and creating the first Reminiscence Centre, now visited by 25,000 people a year from all over the UK and beyond. Part of her work has been the publication of 30 books of edited and illustrated reminiscences centred on key themes in social history of the twentieth century.

Much of the above work was based at Age Exchange Theatre Trust, a registered charity which she founded in 1983. Its mission is to improve the quality of life of older people by emphasising the value of their reminiscences to old and young through pioneering artistic, educational, health and social care activities. Pam Schweitzer also set up an international network of reminiscence arts workers and organisations, the European Reminiscence Network, co-ordinating international festivals of reminiscence theatre and initiating collaborative action research projects in reminiscence across 16 countries in Europe.

She has developed reminiscence theatre, drama and visual arts work based on the memories of ethnic minority elders, working with professional actors and with the elders themselves. She has spoken at conferences in many countries about reminiscence work, some focusing on Alzheimers and dementia, some on the arts, some on issues of culture and migration and some on community care and older people. Pam Schweitzer is now working as a consultant and freelance practitioner in the field of arts and older people, communication in dementia care and international co-operation on creative projects.

ARTS EDUCATION: AN ATTRACTIVE GATEWAY TO LEARNING

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The German Cultural Council, the national federation of all German arts associations, has reiterated several times: „Arts education is a process of lifelong learning. In the face of the demographic change adult education in the arts and especially cultural work with seniors are of increasing relevance”.

For many years the Institute for Arts Education and Culture researches and develops new methods and concepts of arts education for all ages. Especially, during the last three years there was a very dynamic development of arts educational work with older people in Germany. An increasing number of older people don't want to be anymore only passive consumers of arts and culture but they wish to participate actively in cultural processes. Manifold forms of self-organised cultural learning are arising lately in Germany.

Parallel to this the providers of arts education are discovering older people as an interesting target-group and try out news forms of teaching and new learning-settings. We are convinced that especially arts education is a good and attractive gateway to learning. It holds various possibilities of aesthetical experience and specific methods.

This is because creativity promotes respect of the characteristic of the materials, the objects, the themes and of other individuals. Bringing together sensual and integral forms of expression, arts education enhances processes of (self) awareness. It facilitates the encounter with and understanding of other people. Being active in the arts and culture empowers the individual not only to understand complex processes of change but also gives him / her orientation in these processes and the possibility to actively take part in them. Cultural skills are necessary to develop and preserve key competences like the abilities concerning self-awareness, orientation, self-expression, communication and critical faculties.

In the workshop some of the new forms and methods of learning and teaching addressing older people that are tried out in Germany will be presented and discussed. The results of a qualitative study entitled “Gateways and barriers to an active cultural participation” we conducted last year will be presented. We interviewed 30 older locals and migrants who are culturally active. In the interviews they told us about their access to cultural activity, the possible barriers and their personal benefit from it.

Gerda Sieben is Director of the Institut für Bildung und Kultur, Remscheid (Institut for Education and Culture.) Research and development of new models of arts education in the fields: New Media and Culture, Work Life Balance / Work & Culture / New Cultural Services, Arts Education in Later Life. National and international projects.

The issue that brought us together here in Glasgow is of equal relevance for all European countries and regions: The demographic change. The Europeans are getting older, fewer and more colourful. This development concerns in a very specific way the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, where I come from. Among the 18 Million inhabitants of this very industrial area of Germany there is a high percentage of migrants with 140 different nationalities. Because of the structural changes that suffers the region (come-down of the coal mining) the process of ageing of its population is much more accelerated than in other

German regions.

Although the demographic shift might challenge the social systems and require new political answers, we should not forget the fact that an increasing number of people is reaching a high age to be an achievement of civilization and culture in the first place. Not only medical progress but, above all, the development of social justice, social care and democratic participation are essential conditions for the over-all increase of life expectancy.

Compared on an international level it becomes very evident that the life expectancy in different nations and social groups reflects also their prosperity and access to resources. In Germany, for instance, it corresponds to the level of education and income: the life expectancy of migrants is considerably below the one of the native population, well-educated people live longer than socially disadvantaged.

The opportunity to deal actively with the demographic shift and with ageing in Europe should be understood as a privilege, but a privilege which should be available for all.

At the European level we should consider the achievements of the different societies - in terms of culture and in economic fields of action. For this purpose, the SEN@ER - Silver Economy Network of European Regions, a joint initiative of 16 European regions, has been initiated by the region of North Rhine-Westphalia (Germany). The regions have agreed on the "Bonn Declaration for the Silver Economy as an Opportunity for Quality of Life, Economic Growth and Competitiveness in Europe." The intention is not only to seize upon the economic opportunities for the ageing society through orientation toward the interests and needs of older customers but also to take the chance for a better quality of life.

In the framework of the SEN@ER Network my institution is coordinating the "Special Interest Group Ageing & Culture": age-culture.net links partners in 16 European regions, also from Scotland.

I am very happy and grateful that Strathclyde University invited us to this conference and kindly hosted a network meeting of age-culture.net in the framework of the event. All partners are benefiting from the stimulating ideas and practices presented during these two days.

The relevance of culture for the building of a United Europe

In this conference, the relevance of education in later life is in the focus. My speech will be specifically about educational processes in arts and culture.

In the European Union culture is a key for identity, integration, diversity and creativity. It is a field of action that is especially well-suited to further develop the social political and economic opportunities of the demographic change. Cultural exchanges and co-operations are a good way of raising awareness of European cultural diversity. They are essential for European integration and adhesion and contribute to the building of a European identity.

The present and future 'silver' generations are and will continue to be familiar with a united Europe. Older people are increasingly interested in travelling – this includes travelling abroad, staying abroad for longer periods, and having contact with other nationalities and cultures. They are choosing to spend an increasing amount of its leisure time learning about and getting familiar with new cultures. The personal histories of the present generation of senior citizens contain a cultural memory-bank of Europe's more recent history. They are or can become important ambassadors and mediators of knowledge and experiences between the cultures and generations within the European integrational process. The engagement with and participation in arts and culture release inevitably a process of learning and education. In Germany, courses and seminars offered in the field of older adult learning are predominantly cultural oriented.

Culture as a nourishment in every phase of life

Culture is a nutrient delivering stimuli that are vital for the development of an individual's personality at all stages of life, but also for the integration of the individual into society. It is "not

only embellishment or decoration for society, but is a driving force, or possibly even the strongest driving force, behind development in society”.

The concept of culture

In Germany we distinguish between a wide and a narrow concept of culture. The narrow concept refers to the different forms of artistic practices: people are considered both as creators and as recipients of the arts. The wide concept comprises all forms of how individuals practise artistic and social techniques of culture: how they speak, dress, communicate, live, make music or produce TV. Both concepts are of relevance for older people and their active involvement into arts, culture and education.

In Germany the idea of arts or cultural education implies that participation in arts and culture. Arts education does not only mean to acquire artistic competences, but includes all forms of formal, non-formal and informal learning. Arts education contributes to a better comprehension of the steadily growing “symbolic material” that our societies engender and enables the individual to “read” and to “handle” this material. It raises awareness for the sensitive and aesthetic qualities of these forms of artistic expression.

A short review of the history of older adult education in Germany demonstrates how education and especially arts education in older age developed in the past decades. I am very curious to know whether this process has been similar in your country or if there are fundamental differences.

The sixties: Caring for disadvantaged older people

In the fifties and sixties older adult education was intended to keep older people busy offering them entertainment and leisure activities in the framework of welfare and parochial organisations. The older learners remained rather in a passive position.

At that time providers of „arts education“ for children developed in many branches of the arts own organisational structures. But there weren't any structures for older adults. Arts and culture were only a medium and content of activities, like singing together.

The seventies: Activation and emancipation

- The opportunities of lifelong learning / learning in older age are discovered by gerontology.
- The (political supported) expansion of education (education for all) includes for the first time also older adult a potential group of learners.
- Following the French example the first academy for seniors is founded and universities begin to open up for older guest auditors.
- The concept of lifelong learning is born. It aims to promote the equality of opportunities and the permanent adaptation to the challenges of the accelerating technical development.
- Older adult education is based on the knowledge about ageing and the knowledge for ageing.

The eighties: Autonomy and maintenance of competences

- Autonomous initiatives are created which consciously differ from the established institutions. Self-governed “initiatives of older people” emerge as a response to patronizing care models.
- Self-experimentation and dynamic group processes are important forms of learning.
- The increasing compulsory early retirement of older workers and employees as a result of the structural changes makes it necessary to cope with the “problem” of an increased leisure time: learning programmes to prepare early retirement are created.

- Providers of adult education develop programmes for the maintenance of competences in daily life, for the compensation of health restrictions and for prevention with the aim to secure independent living and self-determination of older people.
- Senior studies with own grading systems are established.
- In the field of arts education first concepts are developed (cultural work with seniors). Arts and culture are intended to promote personal development in older age. Not realised dreams, hidden talents and individual expression are to be discovered. Community oriented forms of cultural participation of older people (in community centres, neighbourhoods) is promoted.

The nineties: Focusing environment and biography

- The active generation of older people (born in the 30s) is better educated and more self-confident than the generation before and establishes self-organised forms of education.
- There is a boom of „environmental activities“. The environmental approach is based on the definition of the situation by the individual. These activities define objectives and forms of learning.
- Individual perspective that focuses the biography and the experiences of historically different generations.
- Emphasis of the difference between learners: heterogeneous learning groups, intergenerational and intercultural approaches.
- Arts education: Artistic reminiscence work, storytelling, literary awards, theatre work, multimedia arts approaches (digital storytelling, radio, video, internet, digital image editing).

The 2000s: Infrastructure and self-organisation

There is an increasing awareness among the majority of the citizens that old age is a historically new, not yet defined and quite open phase of life. Analogue to the boom of the theme „Demographic shift“ the public interests and funding increase and result in a further differentiation of older adult education.

- Older adult education becomes more demand-driven and environment-oriented.
- Arts education: Self-organised learning forms, cultural „salons“, independent senior academies, groups for theatre and music, clubs for cultural tourism, video- and internet groups enrich the cultural map. These initiatives join into networks and their innovative ideas have impact on the established cultural institutions.
- Many older people act as cultural ambassadors and mentors.
- Key work-approaches are developed further.
-

Arts education in later life

Several social interests (education policies, economy, and sociology) determine the aims of education in later life. For us it is especially important that the learners themselves define their interests and aims when they choose to return to education. In order to further develop arts education for seniors we should ask in the first place:

- What do older people want to learn about arts and culture in order to benefit from the concept of ageing-well?
- How can arts education in later life improve the opportunities to increase quality of life and social cohesion?

Biographical integration, the ability to cope with the challenges of every-day-life and the development of creative competences are today the elements of the German understanding of modern education in old age. However, these aims are only realised partly.

We are convinced that especially arts education is – apart from artistic production and creative processes – a good and attractive gateway to learning. It holds various possibilities of aesthetical experience and specific methods:

This is because creativity promotes respect of the peculiarities of the materials, the objects, the themes and respect of other individuals. Experimenting integral and sensual forms of expression and learning enhances processes of (self-) awareness and facilitate the encounter with and understanding of other people. Arts education empowers the individual not only to understand complex processes of change but also gives him / her orientation in these processes and the possibility to actively take part in them. Therefore arts education creates the conditions for the successful acquirement of the constantly growing cultural potential of humanity.

Starting from this wide concept of culture cultural skills are necessary to develop and preserve key competences like the abilities concerning integration, participation, self-awareness, orientation, self-expression, communication and critical faculties.

The German Cultural Council, the national federation of all arts associations, reinforced for several times: „Arts Education is a process of lifelong learning. In the face of the demographic change Adult Education in the arts and especially cultural work with seniors are of increasing relevance.”

The importance of arts education in later life for individual development

“Without singing I would not have acquired such a positive attitude towards me and others”, says a seventy-five-year-old woman who has been singing in a chorus for many years.

„Without writing I would not understand my life...“, says an eighty-year-old author who started writing after retirement.

“Without playing theatre I would have buried the experience of immigration in me. Now it has become an integral part of me”, says a sixty-eight-year old Greek woman who is part of a multi-ethnic theatre group for six years now.

At the individual level arts and culture help to focus personal changes, questions, emotions and contradictions with artistic means. Beyond this, these themes are communicated into society and opened for a public debate. Arts and culture are important factors of socialisation – this has been proved in the field of arts education for children and young people. Also in the second half of our life our personality continues to develop when - like in adolescence - individuals must cope with biological, biographical and social changes and need the abilities of adaptation, development and compensation of the decreasing body functions. The increasing life-experience and the decreasing life-time require new strategies of integration and interpretation. Values and aims in life are questioned and newly weighted. If integration fails, social and health problems are – like in adolescence – the consequence and engender considerable follow-up costs.

Meanwhile education in younger life prepares for adulthood and professional life (by vocational training), the necessity of education in old age often isn't taken into consideration. There are many “new” and unexplored situations and motivations of learning. They oscillate between the freedom from the necessity to exploit concretely the acquired knowledge and the self-censorship that questions whether older people are still able to learn in old age and whether it is worth to return to education in this phase of life. There is, however, an increasing need to adapt to new cultural techniques (for instance, internet) or to use cultural techniques to manage crises in life (mourning, loss of partners and friends).

Meanwhile older adult education mainly focuses the question of a practice that stimulates learning (see Kade 2007) – for which practice an older adult should concretely learn? – arts education doesn't consider this question. Arts and culture dispose of an own specific practice that engenders an autonomous signification based on its aesthetic self-referentiality. The engagement

with arts and culture provides enjoyment, stimulating experiences and personal fulfilment. When older people express personal issues through creative activity, arts education gains added value. This is the reason why there is a „boom“ of cultural forms of learning and participation in older adult education. However, there are also limitations, p.e. in the methods of transfer of artistic competences in older age: how does an older person learn to play an instrument, how will he / she learn to dance at this age? There are still lacking training methods and adequate methods of staging and performing older creativity.

Access to Education

Many self-organised forms of education prove that well-educated seniors tend to organise their educational interests by themselves. Individually or together with friends they organise groups with cultural tourist activities, discussion panels or art workshops. Or they involve as volunteers in the work of arts institutions and benefit from the intergenerational exchange. In the framework of the senior study academies the programmes are often organised and run by seniors themselves. They include also culture in a more specific way: arts history, ethnology and, above all, the practical learning in the different branches of art. In Germany, adult education organisations, private providers of adult education and socio-cultural centres react to this trend and take over the ideas and models.

In contrast, concepts of arts education for older people who are less educated are still missing, for people who are socially or geographically disadvantaged or excluded from cultural participation. There are, for instance, only a few programmes for the growing number of older migrants. The lifelong discrimination in education and culture has cemented the barriers. Some good practices show, however, that especially older people can become cultural mediators and key workers in the cultural sector. They can transmit their know-how to the culturally excluded in their peer group or amongst the younger generation. Culture is a good pathway for social integration and cohesion.

7 theses on the future perspectives of culture, arts education and ageing in Europe

1) Culture is as nourishment and must be open to all

Example:

“Activities in arts and culture can provide dignity and appreciation. And not only to yourself but also to your family who is proud of you.”

This statement was made by a delegate of the Stirling Conference of Older Learners in the Arts in March 2006 and it shows impressively how close cultural activity and social integration are related to each other.

Culture (as a commodity of education, as a product, as public service and as possibility of activity) should be accessible to everybody. This includes older people and especially those who are disadvantaged due to limitations of their mobility or their material or social resources. – Because: Sustainable societies will compete worldwide in how they manage the demographic change. Old Europe is especially challenged within this competition to realise its values and resources.

2) Age has to be looked upon in a differentiated way

Example:

During a discussion on different cultural needs in Cologne an older man said:

“Our interests aren’t the same only because we are over 60! I am interested in classical music, my friends are not – they go to musicals; and my mother, who now is over 80, loves to listen to old hits and military marches which I find quite horrible.”

The variety of life situations in age has to be investigated more deeply. It is necessary to develop appropriate services and products for the different potentials and needs of older people.

The aim of the European countries to increasingly enhance and align the quality of life and the options of their citizens does not allow the life expectation and quality in its regions to develop as divergent as it does now.

All older people in Europe should find appropriate forms of participation and education in the field of arts and culture.

3) Cultural volunteer work is a resource that should be enhanced.

Example:

In Dusseldorf, in Munich and also in Vienna there are mobile cultural services organised by older volunteers. With a "Culture-Suitcase full of surprises" these young seniors are visiting older people and are performing an enjoyable one-woman-show. This delights the visitors as well as the visited people.

Volunteering for cultural and societal tasks needs to be more valorised and promoted. Therefore educational and social backup to encourage volunteer engagement is needed. Voluntary activity needs Europe-wide organisational structures and local support. For instance, volunteer activities of seniors could be supported at a cross-border and intercultural level including them into future European mobility programmes.

4) The cultural potentials of older migrants need to be appreciated.

Example:

For many years there the theatre group "AGORA" from Gelsenkirchen is working with Greek women and migrants from Poland. In the course of the theatre work the women found out that their lives before their migration were very similar. And they started to stage their migration experiences. More important however was the group process which brought many topics to life that normally are a taboo. These women got back their self esteem through this work.

We (in North Rhine Westphalia) know too little about the cultural activities of older migrants and there are too little joint cultural activities. Older migrants are especially competent European citizens. With their ability to live in two cultures they bear the potential to enhance understanding, cooperation and exchange between the European regions. They are very competent partners (and not an underprivileged group). There should be more cultural activities that are open and appealing to migrants.

5) Older people are producers of art and need vocational support.

Example:

In the nineties the "World festival of Older People's Theatre" took place in Cologne. This event showed how different the approaches in theatre work with and by older people can be and of which high quality the productions are. The exchange of experience was especially important for the participants. But what about photography, video, literature, painting and dance? What do we know about the many active older arts producers in Europe?

As professionals and as hobby artists: Older people are producing an immense quantity of cultural substance. The social coverage and vocational education for older artists should be secured. A Europe that is growing together can make even better use of this integrative potential. Mobility, exchange of experience and more intergenerational and age-relevant events, festivals, competitions and encounters should be promoted.

6) Arts education in older life needs to break new grounds.

Example:

In a rural region in North Rhine-Westphalia there are many places of industrial heritage that partially are restored as museums. Craftsmen or former workers and employees maintain these museums, open them, provide guided tours etc. They asked for a special training because they wanted to know how to realise a grandfather-grandchildren-project, how to address the young and the old visitors in the best way. Wouldn't it be interesting if they offered their guided tours also to groups from France or Spain? Why shouldn't they exchange their experiences with older and

younger visitors proceeding from similar occupational groups in other European regions? Innovative forms of art education like key work models can support the work of the older volunteers. On the other hand intercultural and cross-border activities meet the needs of the present generation of older people who is spending an increasing amount of its leisure time familiarising itself with new cultures: Their cultural interests have long expanded onto Europe. Supporting them by European exchanges and mobility programmes could be a measure to improve European integration.

7) Arts education and lifelong learning need new methods and approaches.

Example:

Several arts, music and dancing schools in NRW have started to offer courses for older people. Teachers in these schools recognise that not all methods and didactics they use with children are suitable for old people. Could we learn from you?

Arts education for old people has to be designed in the same differentiated way as arts education for young people. Here we should learn from each other in Europe and try out models and strategies jointly and to develop new learning forms and courses

- providing cultural participation and biographical re-orientation for less mobile and less educated old people
- differentiating the contents, didactics and methods of arts education for seniors
- integrating the latest findings of educational research and gerontology as well as changing lifestyles and images of age
- linking the approaches of arts education for seniors (e.g. theatre, dance, media) with other fields of education

OLDER WORKERS LEARNING (OWL)

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Abstract

The Older Workers Learning (OWL) Project developed a range of innovative methods to assist older workers participate in lifelong learning. The project supported both employed and unemployed adults aged 50+ to re-connect with learning, develop new skills and enhance future employability. It was found that groups worked best with an optimum size and consisted of around 75% female participation and 25% male. A key barrier to involvement was rurality, with less participation in more remote areas as opposed to urban areas. In addition, peer support encouraged and enhanced learning among groups with social interaction playing a key role. Finally, the use of reflective learning and building on past experience resulted in increased confidence of participants. Reflective learning and recognising past achievements is a good basis for progression. Information on learning opportunities has to be more readily available and accessible to older workers. Finally, post-learning support is crucial for sustaining interest and stimulation with considerable work required in educating employers on the benefits associated with developing older workers as lifelong learners.

Graham Smith is Project Manager of employability projects within the Senior Studies Institute, with a particular interest in age and economic demography. Presently managing two Equal-funded programmes in Scotland, working with a range of older adults as well as public and private sector organisations. Currently working towards an MBA at the University of Strathclyde Business School.

EQUAL PROJECTS AND EMPLOYABILITY IN LATER LIFE (INTERIM REPORT)

1. Introduction

The Senior Studies Institute was established in 1991 to meet the increasing demand from older people for learning which matched their interests, aptitudes and needs. The Institute has grown to become a centre of excellence for the provision of lifelong learning for older people, with more than 3,000 students each year participating in SSI programmes. The Senior Studies Institute is unique in Scotland, and has become internationally recognised for both the quality of its educational programme and its expanding role in advising policy makers and business on age-focused issues.

The past five years have brought significant developments relating to employability and older adults. Growing pressure on both the government and employers to address the country's ageing population has increased considerably. New Legislation to protect employees now exists and employers are increasingly aware of the competitive and operational benefits of having a diverse workforce.

During this period, the Senior Studies Institute has been involved in research and practical activity in order to enhance employability among older workers. It has also been working closely with businesses to promote and encourage a positive approach to the older workforce. This work has been particularly prominent since the introduction of the Age Discrimination Legislation introduced in October 2006.

As a result, and in addition to various research reports, a strong portfolio of programmes has been developed aimed at tackling the issue of Scotland's ageing workforce in a climate of demographic change. This interim report provides an overview of Equal funded employability activity carried out by the Institute to date and illustrates working relationships with companies, local enterprise companies and local councils. The report also describes work carried out with older workers and older unemployed adults looking to re-enter the labour market by embracing lifelong learning for personal development and fulfilment as well as career progression.

The final report will be produced in June 2007, on completion of the Equal funded programmes.

2. Equal Projects

EQUAL is a European Community initiative designed to help a range of target groups with a particular focus on equality issues associated with gender, disability, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, age and sexual orientation. The initiative also supports the social and vocational integration of asylum seekers and refugees.

The programme uses a thematic approach to explore new ways of tackling problems common to different types of discrimination and inequality. This approach encourages wide and diverse partnerships, of which the Institute is actively involved in two:

Theme F – Work-life Adaptability Partnership:

Led by Adam Smith College, Fife, the partnership aims to promote inclusive working practices and adaptability in the workplace by helping employers and employees adapt to economic changes. Contributing to this, the Institute piloted two programmes: the Older Workers Learning (OWL) project and the Scottish Work-life Adaptability Network (SWAN).

Theme H – Genderwise Scotland:

Led by Glasgow Caledonian University, this partnership seeks to trial practical and innovative solutions to reduce gender pay gaps and support desegregation in the Scottish labour market. The Advancing Women's Employability (AWE) project is contributing to this aim by working with a range of women across Scotland who would like to increase future employability.

2.1 Scottish Work-life Adaptability Network

Adaptability in the workplace and work-life balance of older employees can provide a range of benefits to companies, including increased competitiveness, increased staff morale and greater flexibility of staff.

Working with 48 companies, predominantly in Lanarkshire, the project brought together HR practitioners and company managers to explore development in age-related employment practice, the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT) to improve company adaptability and efficiency, as well as work-life practices within companies.

The project aimed to establish a network of companies interested in improving their adaptability and the work-life balance of employees. Empowerment of individual participants ensured that the project programme met their identified needs, with a particular focus on supporting older staff in developing new skills and increasing the retention rate in the workforce.

Over 130 managers and staff came together to share experience and explore best practice in areas of particular interest. The project utilised the experience of participating companies, encouraging them to play an active role in delivering a series of seminars covering a range of topics, including:

- *The changing nature of employment:* covering topics such as adaptability, flexibility and training on the workplace. A local company, ATMEL, along with the STUC provided information through use of various case studies;
- *Improving work-life balance:* a programme designed by Senior Studies Institute staff presented the benefits of implementing a system whereby older staff have greater influence in their pattern of work;
- *Preparing for future legislation:* Employment Law Group, Wright Johnson McKenzie, raised awareness of discrimination in the workplace and the responsibility of company managers;
- *Recruitment and retention of older workers:* Ferguson McKenzie Consultants covered competency-based recruitment as a vehicle for attracting larger numbers of older workers with few formal qualifications;
- *Information Communication Technology (ICT):* Learndirect Scotland provided an overview of on-line learning, its ease of implementation and the impact it can have on developing staff; and
- *Health and Safety:* delivered by Scotland's Health at Work, topics included health and safety in the workplace, managing stress and company responsibility.

From the various workshops and discussions that took place throughout the project period, information was collated and provided input for the 'Be Ready' CD-ROM created by Age Positive Scotland.

2.2 Older Workers Learning

A major issue facing Europe, particularly Scotland, is the challenge of an ageing population, particularly the workforce. Improvements in health and lifespan, coupled with reduced birth rates and pension uncertainty, mean that most people may wish to work beyond age 65. Public policy has focused on ways to retain older people in the workforce through discouraging early retirement and exploring ways to increase skills and provide more conducive work patterns. Opening access to education and employment for older workers is beneficial in terms of improved health, financial security and overall quality of life. Increasing the length of employment for older adults will also make a major contribution to reducing pensioner poverty.

The OWL project, piloted in Glasgow, South Lanarkshire and Dumfries & Galloway, designed and developed a bespoke learning programme aimed specifically at engaging and encouraging older adults either in employment or actively seeking work with learning. Experience has shown that peer-assisted support is an effective way of encouraging older adults to stay in employment through the provision of support, guidance and training provided by individuals who have had similar life experiences.

Utilising the expertise of project staff within the Senior Studies Institute, an initial 12-week learning programme was designed and rolled out to company employees. With an emphasis on reflective learning to build confidence, the content covered areas such as personal planning, time management, motivation for learning, ICT and health-related issues. The programme further encouraged delegates to explore areas of personal interest and arranged sessions on this basis.

To date, over 100 beneficiaries have benefited from the OWL programme, twenty three of whom are actively seeking employment. Company engagement has also been positive, with 14 organisations participating and taking advantage of the project.

Partnership working with a variety of key organisations has taken place throughout the delivery phase. In particular, Careers Scotland participated in the learning programme, advising beneficiaries who are seeking career changes. Learndirect Scotland contributed by informing individuals on sources of funding available for further learning as well as guidance on on-line learning materials available. Finally, good linkages were made with local FE institutions in the

pilot areas. This involved representatives from various Colleges providing information on courses and learning opportunities available in each of the areas.

The project has now entered the final phase, which involves staff playing an active role in offering support and guidance to beneficiaries, and encouraging further learning through personal development planning. The project will conclude in June 2007.

2.3 Advancing Women's Employability

In addition to the issues mentioned earlier in this report, women face significant additional barriers to employment and career progression at a later stage in life, including:

- Lower rates of employment participation;
- Lower average pay;
- More likely to be in part-time work; and
- Much lower or no pension provision, leading to increased pensioner poverty.

The Advancing Women's Employability (AWE) project used a range of methods to engage and support women aged 50+ in developing new careers in higher level jobs, with a focus on growth areas in the local and Scottish economy. Piloted in Glasgow, South Lanarkshire and Lochaber, it supported both employed and unemployed women in exploring their options, acquiring new learning and developing new skills with a view to increasing future employability.

A fundamental feature of the project was the Learning programme delivered to AWE participants during group sessions. It was designed in a way that addressed some of the barriers that prevent women advancing their careers, thus giving a unique dimension to the programme. To ensure credibility, careful deliberations were made about the suitability of the content, its validity with regard to life and employment experiences and status, its appropriateness of style, the pacing of delivery and most importantly its anticipated impact in terms of perceived employability outcomes for participants.

The basic programme content was designed around four inter-related strands:

- *Personal development*: confidence building, self-presentation and motivation, positive thinking, time management and decision making techniques.
- *Employability skills*: core and transferable skills, IT knowledge and competence levels.
- *Employability profile*: job search, application forms, CV update, interview techniques, matching careers and aptitudes and identifying preferred learning styles.
- *Health awareness*: health focused techniques to bring about improved self-esteem and well-being.

Facilitated by project staff, the style of delivery was an informal one of activity-based learning which engaged participants in self-reflection, group discussions and role-play scenarios.

The programme ran over a 12-week period in sessions of two and a half hours and it was anticipated that participants would develop a personalised learning plan and associated learning log.

The second strand of the project was the Pathfinder programme, which aimed to establish links with a selection of industry sectors experiencing growth in the Scottish Labour Market, putting forward the business case of, not only employing older women, but advancing them to senior positions within organisations. Three sectors were chosen: Hospitality and Tourism; Financial

Services; and Health and Social Care, with collaborative work taking place between the Institute and industry agencies, such as the Scottish Tourism Forum, Scottish Enterprise Financial Services team and NHS organisations such as Healthy Working Lives. This work has opened up opportunities to engage with these sectors to promote the benefits of employing older women, using the various pilot groups as working examples.

Finally, the Accelerator programme aimed to bring both the groups of older women together with the selected Industry sectors. This element of the project was built into the Learning programme, whereby representatives from the Industry sectors spoke directly to the groups on the benefits of the particular industry. This provided an opportunity for women to find out more about an area that they may not have previously considered.

3. Summary

SWAN

In reflection, it is noticeable that prior to the increased public awareness of changes in society, there was a significant gap in company awareness of dealing with the issues of an ageing population in a time of demographic decline, and in particular the future impact it is likely to have on the economy in Scotland. The SWAN project helped to address some of these issues and increase awareness of the value and importance of an older workforce.

OWL

Over the course of the programme, it became clear that in order for the project to succeed and be attractive to both individuals and employers, flexibility and adaptability of delivery and tailoring the duration of the learning programme to individual and company needs, would be required. Changes were implemented and the learning programme was offered in a variety of ways, timings and locations to ensure delivery was achieved.

Barriers faced by older workers accessing learning include, lack of time, perceived relevance of the learning offered, and lack of confidence in ability. In terms of groups, an optimum size of more than five and less than fifteen appeared to engender a strong group dynamic, allowing for interaction among learners, sharing of experiences and provision of peer support. There also appeared to be a consistency in the trend, whereby there is greater participation by women than men.

OWL has also been recognised as one of the top three employability projects for older adults in Europe by the Silver Economy Network of European Regions. The awards ceremony, held in Maastricht, The Netherlands in November 2006 commended the innovative and outstanding work being done by the project and described it as a model of best practice in working to improve the quality of life of older workers.

Finally, the Institute commissioned a report '*Older People and Employment in Scotland*' in early September 2006, which looked at the issues of demographic change in Scotland and the wider impact on industry, as well as the issues and challenges of older people and employment. OWL played a part in providing action research information for this report.

AWE

The learning programme was well received by all groups throughout the pilot areas. Opportunities to build in success led to minor adjustments in content, balance and materials being made over the delivery phase. Personal learning planning required time, thought and action, and as a result, was considered by beneficiaries to be inappropriately placed in the initial phase of the programme.

Furthermore, many of the women brought pre-conceived notions about the appropriateness of careers guidance, employability services and lifelong learning institutions for their particular age group. These organisations may be required to review their publicity and marketing materials to promote the image of the older person as appropriate to their offering. In addition, rurality also provided problems, particularly in the Lochaber area, where public transport services are less frequent in the evenings, having an impact on the design of the programme and making participation more difficult for women in employment.

For older women, caring commitments for family members, elderly parents and grandchildren also impact on sustaining employability skills, causing career prospects to be interrupted or restricted. Employers and policy makers could strive to accommodate the implications arising from the caring commitments experienced by women in this age group. Personal and family health problems also impact on the working lives of older women. This in turn showed low confidence and lack of self belief in progressing employability opportunities.

“VIDEO GENERATIONS” - “VIDEO DER GENERATIONEN” AN INTERGENERATIONAL MEDIA PROJECT

Jan Schmolling, Project Manager, Centre of Films for Children and Young People

“Video Generations”, a competition and media forum, which brings both the young and old together, is in this form a unique project in Germany. Set up in 1998 as an annual event it is organised by the Centre of Films for Children and Young People in Germany (KJF) and funded by the Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. As well as the evaluation and comparison of productions from a competitive aspect, KJF projects also focus greatly on the encouragement of media competence of all its participants.

Target groups

Older people (50+) who are e.g. no longer involved professionally in the media business

Generations-spanning groups (up to 25 and over 50 years)

Young people up to 25 who are using the media to deal with the topic “Age” and the environments of older people

Objectives

1. Self-expression in media form, authenticity and media competence

“Video Generations” creates a forum for people over 50 allowing them to express and make public their subjective observations and content-related concerns. This forms an outlet to rightfully correct the stereotype image of the elderly created by mass media (e.g. helplessness, passiveness). The competition inspires participants to transpose a diversity of lifestyles to media from and to challenge taboos, clichés and prejudices. The subjects chosen by the authors arise from personal experiences and are therefore profoundly authentic.

2. Dialogue between the generations

“Video Generations” is a forum to encourage dialogue between the young and the old. Creative media work, referring to the production and reception, has proven to be a “catalyst” in conjunction with the dialogue between the generations. The pedagogical intention of the project is to identify common ground and to discover that differences can be mutually valuable.

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Foreword

The themes of “demographic change” and “dialogue between the generations” have been on the political agenda in Germany for many years now: “Our society is growing older; demographic change is posing new challenges to society. Against this backdrop, the dialogue between the generations takes on new pertinence: older people’s participation in society as well as the future of the younger generation depend on a relationship between the generations that is marked by solidarity”, in the words of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth.

Many federally funded projects have in the meantime evolved into exemplary initiatives in

connection with this theme – such as the intergenerational media project VIDEO GENERATIONS (“Video der Generationen”). This event was conceived in 1998 by the Centre of Films for Children and Young People in Germany (KJF) on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth and has been put on every year since then: for the tenth time in 2007.

The problems and prospects of our “aging society” are also a prominent topic in the public realm today, in particular in the media. Books such as “Battle of the Generations”, “The Methuselah Conspiracy” or “The Age Anxiety Complex”, which present both gloomy future scenarios and possible solutions, are enjoying brisk sales. Corresponding title stories appear regularly in magazines like “Der Spiegel”, “Stern” or “Fokus”. Another indication of the degree of polarization exhibited in the debate is the number of times terms such as “war between the generations” (“Krieg der Generationen”; 1,340,000 entries) and “intergenerational dialogue” (“Dialog der Generationen”; 900,000 entries) appear on the Internet. (Google, German sites, as of March 2007). Just one year ago, “war between the generations” brought 20,000 more hits and the dialogue aspect 6,000 less. This change could be taken as a sign that increasing value is being placed on dialogue.

At a conference on media competence held in late April 2006 by the two German public TV-stations ARD and ZDF in association with the two major Christian churches, one point in particular came to the fore that puts the separation of media work for children and young people from that for senior citizens, an approach shared by many institutions, in a new light. Renowned media education specialist Prof. Stefan Aufenanger in particular emphasized how important it is to understand media competence as an intergenerational mission. Both fields of experience, that of children and youth and that of adults and senior citizens, must be brought together more consistently. It’s not only the children who can learn something from the adults – learning can take place in the opposite direction as well, because every generation has its own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to dealing with the media. What’s important here is to develop models for shared learning. The project VIDEO GENERATIONS represents just such an innovative and proven model.

Video Generations – Project description

The intergenerational project Video Generations consists of several parts:

1. National competition
2. Festival
3. Online database and community
4. Workshops for participants and media educators
5. Publications

1. National competition

The competition has been held annually since 1998 with the following entry conditions:

Video Generations – A video forum for media-makers young and old

1.1 Aims

a) Self-expression in media form, authenticity and media competence

“Video Generations” creates a forum for people over 50 allowing them to express and make public their subjective observations and content-related concerns. This forms an outlet to

rightfully correct the stereotype image of the elderly created by mass media (e.g. helplessness, passivity). The competition inspires participants to transpose a diversity of lifestyles to media and to challenge taboos, clichés and prejudices. The subjects chosen by the authors arise from personal experiences and are therefore profoundly authentic.

b) Dialogue between the generations

“Video Generations” is a forum to encourage dialogue between the young and the old. Creative media work, in terms of both production and reception, has proven to be a “catalyst” in conjunction with the dialogue between the generations. The pedagogical intention of the project is to identify common ground and to discover that differences can be mutually valuable.

1.2 Target groups

- Older people (50+) who are e.g. no longer involved professionally in the media business
- Generation-spanning groups (up to 25 and over 50 years)
- Young people up to 25 who are using the media to deal with the topic of “Age” and the environments of older people

Themes and formats

a) General Competition with free choice of themes

In the “General Competition” entrants can give their fantasy free rein. Films can deal with current social problems or personal reminiscences, desires, visions or anxieties. All types of themes and formats are welcome: suspense-filled fiction films, documentaries, eyewitness portraits, animated films or experimental videos. Particularly desirable here is a personal point of view.

b) Special Theme

(2007: “Burning Hearts – Love, Lust and Passion” / previous themes: “Living Differently”, “Secrets”, “The Art of Living”, “Time” etc.)

Here as well, any format is possible. The intention behind the changing annual special theme is to steer the attention of younger and older people to a common topic, which they can interpret from their own point of view. The theme must therefore be interesting and motivating for both generations. The special themes often provide media centres with an occasion for carrying out an intergenerational project.

Awards

The awards conferred by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth have a total value of 6,000 EUR (Grand Prizes of 1,000 EUR). These are joined by prizes from sponsors. Awards are presented in the categories “Intergenerational Project”, “50plus” and “Special Theme”.

Jury

The award decisions are made by an independent jury composed of six people representing different generations who are involved in the media and culture context (young filmmakers, media educators, professionals from the field of senior citizen culture).

The selection criteria: The video entries nominated for an award should be exemplary in terms of authentic, generation-specific and cross-generation forms of expression and productions and in addition make creative use of the specific qualities of the medium. Professional production values are not a decisive criterion. More important, for example, is that the filmmaker demonstrates the

capability to develop his own unconventional form of expression. The production conditions are taken into account in the decision. The selection criteria always crystallize out during the jury's discussion and voting process.

2. Festival and awards ceremony

The best productions entered in Video Generations are presented at a 3-day "National Video Festival". At this festival, the prize winners in the German Youth Video Award are also shown. Likewise hosted by KJF, this competition addresses children, young people and young adults up to 25 years in age. The combined presentation of both competitions almost automatically promotes dialogue between the young and old. Guiding pedagogical activities are thus almost unnecessary. After all, both generations share an equal interest in shooting films and talking about them. The medium of film thus forms a kind of "catalyst" and joint springboard for discussions of content that go beyond the actual films shown. The points of view expressed on the diverse personal themes and interests presented in the films ultimately lead younger and older people to acknowledge and learn to respect one another's opinions and standpoints. The differences do not lead to exclusion, but are perceived as enriching. But aspects that unite the generations are also (re)discovered. This helps to break down prejudices and stereotypes, one of the central missions of the Video Generations project.

The presentation is crowned by the awards by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth. The festival takes place for two consecutive years in each German state. This change of venues provides a steady stream of new impulses for local media work.

3. Website, online database and community

The website www.video-der-generationen.de has been the "calling card" for the project since the beginning of the competition. It offers up-to-date information, e.g. entry conditions. More and more participants are taking advantage of the option to register their films online. This shows that even older people, at least those interested in media, have an Internet connection available and are making good use of it.

Since increasing numbers of requests are coming in for films from Video Generations, particularly due to the pertinence of the issues of "demographic change" and "cross-generational dialogue", the directory of prior award-winners has been equipped with an easy-to-use search function. Interested users (filmmakers, educators, scholars, journalists) can conveniently search the online database according to specific criteria:

- festival entry in a certain competition year
- all submissions in a certain competition year
- film title
- keywords:
e.g. childhood, departure, environment/ecology, death and mourning, family, friends/friendship, gender relations, history, homeland, ideals, identity, looking at age, looking at youth, love, media criticism, migration yesterday and today, nature, politics, prejudice, racism, religion young and old, sexuality, violence, work (The keywords were chosen by analysing the award-winning productions to date and can be added to as needed.)
- genre: animation, documentary, fiction film etc.
- full-text search

Synopses of the films can be called up as well as the reasons for the jury's decision (in the case of

award-winners). At present, short film clips are also shown, and in future an option for downloading entire films is planned. The filmmakers also have the possibility of publishing their “media biography” (how they came to make films and what this activity means to them) as well as commentaries and statements.

Since, of the 120 - 200 films submitted every year, only about 15 can be shown at the festival, the possibility that has existed since 2007 of integrating all entries into the database has resulted in a documentation of the true variety of the film projects. It is hoped that this information will help network the film scene and promote the initiation of new collaborations and projects.

4. Workshops for participants and media educators

In addition to the short workshops at the festival, Video Generations also offers seminars for filmmakers and multipliers. These are designed to teach practical qualifications, for example with regard to the production of interesting documentaries and eyewitness portraits. The seminars also serve to foster discussion on exemplary and innovative forms of work in the field of intergenerational media work.

5. Publications

At greater intervals, Video Generations releases especially interesting films on DVD in order to support educational work in the area of senior citizen culture. There are plans to distribute the films online in the future.

RESULTS

The annual competitions are statistically evaluated according to various criteria. The results are then used to fine-tune the competition. Overall, participation has proven to be very satisfactory. The project thus has a clear profile on the German competition scene, which is good for the quality of the entries and results in interesting discussions.

Key statistical data

1. Number of films

1998: 52 >>> 2007: 137

2. Age distribution (2007)

14 and under	98
18 and under	87
25 and under	128
49 and under *	172
59 and under	37
69 and under	111
79 and under	96
over 79	113

* The participants included in this group are either media educators or actors – and are thus not the actual filmmakers. (In Video Generations the filmmakers are aged 25 and under, or 50+.)

The distribution between the different age groups shows that even those of an advanced age are included in the projects – playing various roles: both as filmmakers and key actors (e.g. eye-witnesses).

3. Ratio of males to females (2007)

	Total competition
female	45%
male	55%

The ratio of male to female filmmakers is almost balanced: an indication that active media work interests both genders equally and that Video Generations appeals to both.

Participant response

The feedback coming from participants in Video Generations is positive across the board. This is demonstrated by regularly conducted surveys. Here are three examples from the 2005 festival:

“We think a multi-generation festival is an excellent idea. The many discussions and encounters have proven how easy and interesting the dialogue between people in different age groups can be if we all use the same means of communication.” (Jan Walentek, 60)

“Particularly remarkable were the works by children and young people: their creative ideas, visual language, editing and skilful use of music and sound effects. Even if I didn’t understand some of the messages immediately, I have great respect for their achievements. In any case, getting to know young people means a lot to me in my film work.” (Karlheinz Hilsheimer, 71)

“As I already mentioned in the film discussion on stage, I am especially pleased that, just like with the Indians, the “old fogies” are allowed to sit around the campfire with the others. At 74, I was able this time around to again learn a great deal from the young people.” (Horst Orlich, 74)

Trends (2006): Documentary and reportage

At the Video Generations competition in 2006, documentary and reportage once again dominated. As in previous years, portraits on film were a pronounced trend. These documentary formats make up 75 percent of submissions to Video Generations.

There was a noticeably wide range of themes at Video Generations 2006, with many areas of life, the everyday routine and personal emotions presented. Some examples: the autobiographically motivated film ODESSA MAMA tells three stories in a sympathetic manner – a personal one, a family one and a “socio-cultural” one that shows how everyday life in the Ukrainian city of Odessa was experienced subjectively before the “Orange Revolution”. At the centre is an 86-year-old female protagonist and her life with its highs and lows. Despite her ten years in a Stalinist prison camp and her difficult life today, she is an optimistic woman full of kindness and with a positive radiance. With its personal insights, ODESSA MAMA can stand for many of the portraits submitted. The intensive contact between the filmmaker (the woman’s stepdaughter) and the protagonist in addition shows how a combined reference to people and cities can give otherwise distanced travel reports a more personal note.

The working world seems to be a topical theme in many respects for a number of participants. In several entries, the various trades, occupations and even companies or institutions are presented,

with the economic situation playing an important role. In his autobiographical film DAS LEBEN GING WEITER, Alois Stroka looks not only at his career but also at another theme that often recurs in the competition: death and the visualization of the thoughts and feelings that accompany it.

Eyewitness documentaries are almost part of the standard repertoire at Video Generations. The medium of film offers excellent possibilities for preserving and communicating key experiences and events. Thanks to what is often the unselfconscious approach of young video-makers, new perspectives on themes such as the Second World War or the Nazi era emerge. 16-year-old Anne Bettina Nonnass shows how different people experience a war and come to terms with their experiences. WAS WUSSTEN WIR WAS FRIEDEN IST derives its appeal from its selection of eye-witnesses who were still very young at the end of the Second World War. They tell of their childhood, observing the war from a perspective that is seldom explored.

In addition to exploring different cultures, cities and countries, many entries deal with cultural fields such as the fine arts, music or literature. In the associative experimental film (e)AU(x) DE(ux) MER(es), Anne Pierry, 23, and her 59-year-old mother, Elsa Pierry-Grammare, reflect on the theme of “transience” and various aspects of aging in an especially aesthetic fashion. They visualize their thoughts on the differences between the generations and animate the viewer to undertake his own interpretation and contemplation. This film is a particularly good example of how the dialogue between young and old can also be achieved through the non-verbal medium of artistic film.

An award-winner in the Special Theme category “Living Differently” was DIE SCHAU MIT DEM BLUBB by the group “MultiMediaGuerilla”. The 50- and 53-year-old video-makers clearly show what the theme means to them in their kaleidoscopic experimental film. The spirited nonsense story shakes up the clichés of bourgeois propriety and boredom. Viewers can tangibly sense the pure joie de vivre of the two authors and their enjoyment of video art. A counter-culture is shown here in a contrary manner that is so amusing, we can’t help but laugh along.

Conclusion

The national competition Video Generations is in a prime position to convey the significance of intergenerational media work to the public. Even stronger activities are desirable at the grass-roots level, however, for example in media centres, senior citizens’ organizations and schools, which should be able to access cross-disciplinary funding for this purpose. The segmentation that has existed in Germany to date into the areas of youth, senior citizens, culture and social affairs, as well as the division between federal and state authority, is now undergoing a process of transformation. This is demonstrated by the restructuring and renaming of ministries, for example the Ministry for Generations, Family, Women and Integration in the State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The media centres as well are increasingly discovering the age group “50plus” and the socio-political importance of appropriate offers for this target group.

Video Generations proves that younger and older people have a great deal to say to each other when they use the same medium. The different (and in everyday life often segregated) generations can learn here to see others’ lives from a new and subjective angle that is hardly present in this form in the mass media. Through media forums like Video Generations, older people gain the certainty that their opinions still count for something. The contact with young video-makers brings them new inspiration for creative work with media.

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Financial education and older people

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Adult financial education has emerged as a major issue in the UK over the last ten years. Whilst not yet an academic subject in its own right, usually being categorised as either a numeracy or literacy issue, there are qualifications emerging at various levels in adult financial education.

For older people, faced with many change of life issues in later life, there are suggestions that lack of trusted information and sources of advice can marginalise them in financial decision making - at times of crises and also in any intended planning for the future. Work in this area in the UK has drawn together at policy levels all the relevant and responsible sectors - finance, advice agencies, age movements, education, government, compliance and ombudsman services, older people's organisations. In England and Scotland there are networks operating at this level and, in both countries, there have been projects in recent years looking at creating and delivering relevant financial education to older people.

This workshop will draw on these experiences, use the Scottish network as an exemplar and draw - in an interactive way - on the experiences of other conference delegates.

What provision exists?

What needs to exist?

What are the contexts for developing financial education for older people?

Who are the agencies that need to be more aware of their responsibility to ensure better quality of information for older people?

Where do the financial education and Information, advice and guidance issues overlap with other areas of older people's policy in Scotland and the rest of the United Kingdom?

What good practice does exist?

What are older people themselves saying?

How can better financial education assist financial inclusion for older people?

Jim Soulsby BEd MEd works on the Older and Bolder (O&B) programme at the National Institute of Adult Education (NIACE) in England. O&B has developed practical projects, runs an information service and attempts to ensure that education for older people is an integral element of current older people's policy.

Pat Scrutton, Scottish Co-ordinator, Better Government for Older People has two main work interests, community engagement and partnership working, are reflected in her current post. As well as supporting the Scottish Older People's Advisory Group, she is developing a series of interlinked networks, including one on financial awareness and older people.

Financial Education Workshop Report by Val Bissland

Overview: delegates came from a wide range of agencies and sectors but were mainly Scottish. Some people wanted to think about their own level of personal 'literacy/awareness'. What the session revealed was that the whole area is complex; any solutions require cross sector working and there needs to be a lead agency prepared to 'drive' the agenda. There is as yet little government (national and devolved) recognition of the importance of this agenda to older people and no joined-up way to further develop strands and issues highlighted. There is also a dearth of research on many of the aspects - particularly elder financial abuse. It is hoped that each of the delegates left with some future actions to be considered around this agenda.

Participants expressed interest in a wide range of topics at the start of the workshop -

- Possibility of partnership with the Pension Service
- financial inclusion and marginalisation
- networking and “money circles”
- money advice, money management and decision-making
- empowerment, information, self-interest and personal planning
- income maximisation and real choices in retirement
- what is happening now?
- intergenerational financial work and education (volunteering)
- reducing tax and maximising earnings
- classes (potential)
- money to implement ideas.

The key issues that emerged were –

Vulnerable groups (inclusion and equalities)

- people who are bereaved and inexperienced in managing money
- gender differences - including “sexually transmitted debt”
- cultural differences and class differences: danger of pigeon-holing
- money or debt as a presenting issue, cloaking other issues
- people in crisis – search for solutions that can be life-enhancing

Financial education

- information for decision-makers – ‘Information days’ to transmit the diversity of the issues.
- use of volunteers, mentors and trusted intermediaries - helping people find their own solutions throughout their lives
- funding for financial education - possibility of accredited course? (There is an emerging structure, including City and Guilds, Open University, National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education and SQA units)
- financial education needs to be locally based and joined up - need to build on people’s experience and skills
- financial information in hospitals and other public channels
- responsibilities of agencies, e.g. the utilities

Financial challenges

- bank accounts, pin numbers and tax forms
- loans, insurance and debt
- choices, complexity and the difficulty of making comparisons
- financial abuse (Some research results from Brunel University)
- feeding oneself well on a budget

LEARNING AND THRIVING: INSIGHTS FROM A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THRIVING ELDER WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES ON THRIVING

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Abstract

A desire to continue learning was a key finding in a qualitative research study of thriving elder women's perspectives on thriving in elder adulthood. The study of thirteen women, 75-92, was conducted through multiple interviews, projective inventories, and focus groups. All thirteen, who represented a range of ethnicities, education levels, religions, work experience, and marital and economic status, expressed a high regard for reading, books, and learning. The women took pride in limiting television viewing. However, a televised description of depression led one to increase care for herself, using cosmetics for the first time at aged 90, taking up yoga, and studying the Bible with a neighbor. Work and volunteer activities kept their minds engaged and spirits raised. In a projective instrument, Strengths Inventory, the Thinking category most reflected the group's signature strengths, with 30 of the total 65 strengths falling into it, rather than into the Relating (15), Impacting (15), and Striving (5) categories. Wisdom was ranked 2nd most important out of 18 terminal values. Vital involvement in local politics, service, religion, and organizations, and teaching and taking classes were sources of pleasure for them. Some exercised their brains intentionally. Results from a post-study interview focused on learning will be shared. Increasing learning options - including gerontology, health, travel, and psychology lectures, taking elder women seriously, and involving them in our worlds are key messages from the study. They emphasize Erik Erikson's belief that we need to see old age in a new way - to reconceptualize old age. To do so would be a benefit to us all.

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A desire to learn was a key finding in a qualitative research study of thriving elder women's perspectives on thriving in elder adulthood (Stanford, 2006). Learning-focused telephone interviews conducted in a follow-up study confirmed and expanded the learning finding.

The Study and Follow-Up

For the purpose of this paper, I reviewed and analyzed the original study's transcriptions of multiple individual interviews and focus group discussions and responses to projective inventories, focusing on the participants' desire to learn and keep their minds engaged. In the follow-up inquiry, I explored their learning activities, preferences, and advice.

Research Approach

The research approach I used was phenomenology, a form of qualitative inquiry that seeks to understand the lived experience of a phenomenon. Patton (2002) explains that phenomenology focuses "on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness" (p. 4), and Van Manen (1994) observes, "Phenomenology aims at gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences...."(p.9). Through a

deep understanding of the specific experiences of individuals, an understanding of the universal can emerge. Moustakas (1994) describes the process:

The aim is to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essence or structures of the experience. p.13.

The Researcher

Since the researcher is a key instrument in qualitative research, I need to share my background as it relates to the study. At the time of the study, I had taught university courses in human development for 22 years and was interested in the topic of thriving in elder adulthood. Also I had conducted similar studies on positive, persevering elementary school teachers (Stanford, 1999; Stanford, 2001) and one in which I explored how people made sense of their lives in midlife (Hardcastle, 1982; Hardcastle, 1985).

The biases I needed to keep in check were my white race, Christian faith, middle class social status, doctoral education, and Euro-American background. I countered these with my awareness of them and a genuine interest in the participants' perspectives. Previous experience conducting studies with participants of diverse backgrounds and familiarity with qualitative research methodology, through regularly conducting qualitative studies and teaching qualitative research courses, helped me explore the participants' thinking with an open mind.

The Participants

The study participants were thirteen women, aged 75-92 at the beginning of the study and 78-95 in the brief follow-up study. I cautiously describe them as "ordinary," not to diminish their value but to explain how much they are among us. They are the grandmothers, aunts, elder sisters, neighbors, and church or synagogue members we see in our daily lives.

The thirteen were a random mixture of ethnicities, education levels, religions, work experiences, and marital and economic statuses (see Appendix). What they shared in common, beyond age and gender, was the fact that they were regarded as thriving, by others and themselves. I soon learned that they all also lived in their own homes and that all were in good health, with one exception. She suffered from arthritis and needed to use a walker; however, she never complained about her condition and was the most active traveler in the group.

I selected them on a criterion-basis, with the criteria being age, gender, and being thriving. Thriving was simply described as doing well and being happy. I started with four women I knew and used nominations and a snowball sampling process (Patton, 2002) to select the others. The group size of 13 was adequate since a fairly clear saturation level for the group findings was reached. While additional interviews were not likely to add new group patterns, the richness of their life stories could never reach a saturation point.

Eleven women participated in the brief follow-up study. One of the remaining two died toward the end of the original study, and the other suffered from pneumonia and was too weak to participate in the follow-up study.

Learning-Based Findings

I integrated the learning-focused analysis of the original data with the follow-up data analysis. Seven findings emerged: a) love of reading, b) vital involvement, c) service, d) activity over television viewing, e) thinking strengths, f) learning activities and exercises, and g) attitudes towards learning and thriving.

Love of Reading

The participants' love of reading was quickly evident. In the first eight interviews five volunteered book recommendations, urging me to read John Adams, The Da Vinci Code, The Bob Hope Story, The Celestine Prophecy and The Art of the Fresh Start. One had read to

become an expert on local history and another read on America's first ladies. Both had given public presentations on their study interests.

The participants were reading enthusiasts. "I read a lot. I've got books all over the place!" Lizzy, 90, explained. (Pseudonyms are used for all participants). Tabitha, 85, a volunteer in her local library, said, "Luckily I have access to every book I want...I'd be lost if I couldn't go to the library!" Favorite books included mysteries, biographies, the Bible, inspirational books, literary classics, and history.

Vital Involvement

The participants were vitally involved in their worlds. Several continued to work and most participated in organizations.

Continuance of work. Three continued to work, one wished she had, and one was a landlord. Ruth, a realtor, owned a realty company. She stopped working a year after the original data collection, when she was 82.

Jasca, 81, was an art teacher in an adult education program and taught children's classes in her home studio. In our telephone interview, she mentioned missing two months of work when she had pneumonia, but she was back teaching again. Her daughter told her she would die with her boots on, and Jasca had replied, "I hope so!"

Dorothy, 83, worked on a church staff. As the minister's assistant she kept the church affairs going smoothly, even while he traveled. Sometimes she did so well that parishioners did not realize that the minister was away.

Alice, 87, missed her work. Atypical of her reserved ways, she exuded, "I'd like to go back into business again. I was a fantastic counselor. It was not a challenge. I would be happy doing that, I really would....I loved my job."

Lizzy owned and managed a three-condo building in a crowded residential area near a university. She lived in one condo a flight above the garages and leased the two above her. Her busiest work as a landlord occurred whenever she had a new tenant. At 90 she prided herself on her ability to quickly climb the outdoor flight of steps up to the three condos.

Participation in organizations. Most participants were members of service and interest organizations. As a former teacher, Rose, 84, held local and national leadership positions in Delta Kappa Gamma, an education honor society.

Kelly, 80, was in a science organization: "I'm keeping busy with the Planetary Society. We have a big Mars fest coming up."

Four were active in their city's women's club. Five attended the city's Citizens Congresses, which sought residents' input on future planning. Five were active in "Friends of the Library." Jane, 77, was a leader in her town's historical society.

Three sang with their church choirs. Dorothy also performed with the "Young at Heart Singers."

Service to Others

Most participants worked part-time as volunteers. Lizzy was active in three areas: the maternity ward in a university hospital, a National Council of Jewish Women's ministry, teaching English to mission families, and the Council's thrift shop. She had helped two days a week in the hospital for over 20 years and still volunteered there:

I'm with maternity and all the brand new babies....I hold them. I show the mothers how to breast-feed....I change the diapers, and I give the moms magazines and juice - - whatever they wish.

Tabitha volunteered many years for the police department, working in the evidence room, "until they had to work to find work for me to do," she qualified, "then I quit." She also regularly went early to her church to turn the heat on in cold weather and unlock the building for church services. She baked for most church gatherings, actively cared for invalid friends, and was an officer for decades in the Order of Eastern Star, a group connected with Freemasonry and

teachings based on the Bible. Her numerous service activities were part of the reason her city named her "Senior Citizen of the Year" when she was 81.

Kelly, a former Time magazine proofreader, volunteered as the proofreader for a local monthly newspaper, and Frances contributed columns to it.

Dorothy was a soloist at funerals:

I tallied up all the times I sang for families of the deceased, and it was 610. This includes funerals, memorial services, rosaries and masses. Being a soloist has been like the frosting on the cake of my life.

At her church Rose, 84, created and organized an annual speaker series leading it for over ten years. She, like others in the study, also conducted a bible study group.

Tani, 78, an artist, found time to volunteer in her church. Sylvia, 93, had been a temporary foster care mother for 47 (!) children while their home assignments were determined. Martha's service focused on her family. At 88 she still froze extra servings of her meals to give to family members for whenever they were "tired after working all day." Service was clearly a practice of all of the women, one which engaged their minds as well as their hearts.

Activity over Television Viewing.

The women seemed to take pride in limiting their television viewing to certain times and certain programs. Tani observed, "I try to keep the television off because I don't like what I see and the standards that are being put forth for those who are vulnerable - - my grandkids and their children." Lizzy followed her own rule: "No TV until 6:00 p.m." Martha enjoyed watching traditional Spanish novellas but not the recent ones which are "just too modern for me."

News programs were first place in popularity with the participants, and Jeopardy was a close second. Racing for the right answer was a game for Tabitha and Kelly and also for Rose and her husband. Favorite programs included Law and Order, Wheel of Fortune, films, comedies, and education programs on the History, National Geographic, Biography, and Discovery Channels. Television served a life-changing purpose for one participant. A description of the symptoms of depression on the Dr. Phil Show and the admonition to love oneself led Frances to increase care for herself, using cosmetics for the first time at aged 90, taking up yoga, and studying the Bible with a neighbor.

The women chose reading and activities rather than television viewing. From Lizzy: "I think that some people just don't have enough to do. No interests, so they go to the tv....It's a shame really. You miss a lot." Lizzy was a model of engaged activity. She went regularly to the Getty Museum, loved walking to nearby theatres to see films, attended political rallies, and went to college ball games with her granddaughter. When she was in a rare low point, after her husband of 52 years had died, she was tricked by her daughter into attending what she thought was "one more grief therapy group." Instead it was a "cattle call" by advertisers seeking older people for commercials and billboards. Lizzy was selected for a television commercial and an advertising campaign, and appeared on billboards throughout her city. "Friends would call to tell me of new sightings [of the billboards]," she laughed.

Thinking Strengths.

The participants' inclinations toward being strong thinkers was evident in the results of the Strengths Quest Inventory (Clifton & Anderson, 2001), an online instrument of 180 paired comparison items that are categorized into 34 groupings or themes. The top five themes that emerged from taking the inventory were called the participants' signature strengths. Nearly half of the group's signature strengths, 30 of 65 (5 for each of the 13) were in the Thinking Category. Figures for the other three areas were: Relating-15, Impacting-15, and Striving-5. Their Thinking signature strengths were input (11), connectedness (6), learner (5), intellection (4), consistency (2), analytical (1), and strategic (1). Each participant had from one to five of their signature strengths in the Thinking category.

In their interviews the women expressed strong opinions. Sylvia mentioned her dismay about babies lost due to abortion every time I met with her. Ruth complained, "I can't believe that in

this country, we have people...starving and needing to be in mental hospitals...and yet we walk right by them and go all over the world." Lizzy exclaimed, "The only kids that know ethics any more are the young ones." All shared candid views on themselves and contemporary society.

Learning Activities and Exercise

Learning activities. Four participants took classes in ceramics, sewing, rug hooking (tapestries), and memory skills. Some learned things in the process of doing other things, such as using a cell phone. Jasca relearned the Lux Eterna, sung in Latin, for a choir performance. When Ruth moved to another state, she joined the League of Women Voters and historical society to learn about her new town. Four regularly used computers for business, book purchases, and emails.

Reading was a key vehicle for learning, helping them keep up on the news and enriching their faith. Most studied the Bible. Those who could no longer read, missed it. "When you can't read, that cuts out a lot," Sylvia observed.

Brain exercises. Several exercised their brains with cross-word puzzles, the newspaper bridge column, solitaire, Suduko, chess, and computer games. Some memorized scriptures or poetry. With her reading visibility gone, Sylvia was glad she had memorized a lot of scriptures. "A situation will come up, and I will have a scripture right on my tongue that just fits the situation."

Attitudes toward Learning and Thriving

Appreciation of education. Alice reflected other participants when she said: "I value that I had an education and was able to be educated. That made a tremendous difference in my life."

Martha, widowed when her four children were young, strongly advocated for education, due in part to her own experience:

I didn't have a chance to have an education... My father worked in the fields picking oranges, and my mother decided to do housework. So at thirteen she got me out of school to take care of my baby sister.

With her encouragement Martha's four children completed bachelors or masters degrees. In the high school custodial work she did to support her family, she also promoted education. "I really became the girls' counselor, there in the locker room." The administrators gave her assistants to free her to counsel more: "They'd say, Mrs. __, we want you to put them back on track...And I did that for most of them. And after they graduated those girls would come back to thank me."

Learning preferences.

The participants reflected a holistic view of learning in their definitions of learning. Tabitha defined learning as "just living," Alice as "mental growth with a purpose" and Rita as "advancing, being above where you were before." Jasca defined learning as "self growth."

Several said they learn best by doing, interacting one-on-one, and hearing things discussed. The social aspect of learning appealed to them. Several said they learned best by reading and thinking. When asked for their current ideal and most preferred way to learn, most said through travel.

Advice on thriving.

The participants proposed an outward view in their advice on thriving. Kelly recommended: "Keep your interest in everything that is going on around you and keep up on what's happening in the world." Jasca advised: "Find out what your strengths are...and develop them in the best way you can. And remember that you ...did not do anything to earn them. They were given to you, and they are for you to give away."

Significance

Three broad findings from this study are of particular value: a) the women's vital involvement in life, b) their intentionality regarding learning, and c) their mental engagement. Their vital involvement in work, organizations, and service reflects what Erik Erikson proposed over two decades ago: "the need to rethink the role of old age" (Hall, 1983, p. 22). He suggested that rather than adding a new stage to his model of Eight Stages of Man (Erikson, 1950), that the

stage of Generativity versus Stagnation be regarded as extending longer or transitioning through a phrase into the final stage. Erikson observed that while older adults cannot be generative in terms of procreativity, they can be in terms of creativity and productivity. He recommended that they "be allowed to remain involved in matters that have always been considered too much for them" and predicted that "people will one day be expected to work longer. And even after they retire, old people can be useful to one another and to the younger generations" (Hall, 1983, p. 24).

The women's intentionality regarding learning was an encouraging finding. Their deliberate limiting of television viewing, their preference for a mental game show (Jeopardy), and their use of games that exercised the brain reveal their desire to take steps to stay mentally alert. Their holistic definitions of learning describe learning as ongoing, natural, and integral to living. Those who design learning opportunities for elders can be guided by this finding.

The women's mental engagement, indicated by their Thinking signature strengths and their willingness to express their opinions, show us that they are to be taken seriously. They are mentally still in the game of life and not mere spectators, and their insights deserve recognition and appreciation.

The thriving elder women's lives and learning invite us to rethink old age and the potential it holds. The image they provide is a welcome one. It can inform and benefit others who are elderly, those who work with the elderly, and those who will one day be elderly.

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Author Note

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GRAY MATTER MATTERS WHEN IT COMES TO SUCCESSFUL AGING

Brain-based learning methodologies to facilitate aging staff in lifelong learning

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ABP / Loyalis, The Netherlands

Emerging scientific insights into how the human brain functions offer exciting opportunities to redesign traditional training courses into activities that appeal to people's natural ways of learning. Teaching and learning according to the brain's natural learning paths stimulates all our senses and opens the gateway to the rediscovering of the sheer joy of learning. This may help to encourage older employees, in particular, to start learning again.

This workshop presents the key elements of Brain-based Learning and the scientific research on which these elements are based.

Purpose and objectives

Purpose:

Bridging the gap between neuron scientific findings and educational applications in a corporate environment, especially targeted towards learning needs of employees aged 45+.

Objectives:

- 1. Participants will learn the scientific insights on which brain-based learning is based.*
- 2. Participants will learn the characteristics of cognitive aging and its implications for the design and delivery of learning activities.*

The audience

Academics and HRD-professionals

Leonore Stollwerk BA MSc is senior consultant, specializing in cognitive aging and lifelong learning. She is currently with the R&D department of ABP / Loyalis, based in The Netherlands. She is worldwide active in the field of accelerated learning and brain-based teaching and especially interested in the design and delivery of training interventions targeted towards the learning needs of aging staff.

Keywords: Brain-based learning, Corporate education, Aging workers, Learning to learn, Active Aging.

Introduction

The roots of Brain-based learning can be found in the 1950s, when the Bulgarian psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov conducted pioneering scientific research into the hidden potentials of the brain. Lozanov referred to his research as Suggestopedia, in which he studied the connection between perception, suggestion and learning.

The end of the Iron Curtain period made it possible to convey the findings of Lozanov to the new world, where this resulted in a teaching approach based on new insights into how the human brain functions and its implications for the design and delivery of training programs.

Brain - based learning: a confusing term

In essence, Brain-based learning is an attractive but also a confusing term. Attractive, because it is appealing to educational professionals and learners alike as it suggests a new and affective way of teaching and learning. Confusing, because every learning activity has always been and will always be

brain-based. It is therefore extremely important to recognize the difference between ‘new’ learning based on brain myths, and learning based on the explicit knowledge derived from systematic scientific research.

In 1990, the U.S. Library of Congress announced “The Decade of the Brain”: an initiative to enhance public awareness of the benefits to be derived from brain research. In the wake of this prestigious project, cutting-edge research and the dissemination of the acquired results have greatly contributed to our current understanding of cognitive and emotional processes that are related to learning.

The cooperation between experts in the field of neuroscience and educational science on the one hand, and trainers and educators on the other has resulted in a vast amount of well documented and analyzed training interventions.

These interventions have in common that they are designed according agreed key-principles of brain-based learning. In the corporate environment HRD-professionals may have a great influence on the redesign of the curriculum by applying these elements in training interventions.

Key elements for the design and delivery of Brain-based learning activities

Fundamentally, the concept of brain-based learning includes practical experiences with positive strengthening of the natural learning abilities of every individual. Powerful learning will engage both the analytical and the emotional brain, along with the conscious and unconscious state of mind. Based on these principles, the following seven key-elements may contribute to a successful program design.

1. Knowledge about the Human Brain, in the corporate environment
especially about the cognitive aging brain
2. The Learning Environment
3. The Emotional State
4. Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles
5. The Role of Music
6. Personal Motivation
7. Team Learning and Cooperation

In the Netherlands, ABP / Loyalis HRD-department has taken the initiative for the design of a Learning to learn course, based on these elements and targeted to employees aged over 45 years.

ABP is the sectoral pension fund for employers and employees in the public and education sectors in The Netherlands. With 2.6 million members and assets under management of € 240 billion, ABP is one of the largest pension funds in the world. ABP’s complex and demanding tasks are executed by 3.000 employees. Fifty four percent of the staff is aged younger than 45; forty six percent is aged over 45. This age distribution is illustrative for organizations in the public sector in The Netherlands.

Due to normal cognitive aging, older employees differ in their learning preferences and learning abilities from their younger colleagues. Most of the jobs within ABP, as they are in many information processing organizations, are intellectually demanding and require an almost permanent commitment from staff members to continuous learning. The traditional way of teaching does not always take into account the changing way in which aging staff learns best. This causes a relatively high number of people who express their aversion towards training courses. Due to a change in legislation, the working horizon for most people has now extended with at least eight years. Our intensive knowledge economy needs the ongoing contribution of experienced people so, it is imperative that this large group has the ability to stay current. Courses designed and delivered according proven Brain-based learning principles may help to overcome existing learning barriers, thus enabling aging employees staying successful in their performance.

This ABP/Loyalis learning to learn course “*Gray Matter Matters When It Comes to Successful Active Aging*” is meant as a first and important step in encouraging aging staff to keep on learning in both formal and informal situations. Lifelong learning in this context is then merely a treat instead of a threat.

DEMOCRATISING AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE: THE ENCOURAGE ARTS PROGRAMME FOR OLDER PEOPLE in Glasgow.

**Professor Raymond Thomson, Deputy Director of Lifelong Learning,
University of Strathclyde**

Abstract

Glasgow is the main cultural powerhouse of Scotland yet suffers from very high levels of multiple deprivation. The purpose of the ENCOURAGE Programme is to expand older people's involvement in the arts, to build bridges to those on the cultural margins of the city. It engages participants in arts activities through a mixture of workshops and performances in local areas, but with the final aim of bringing these people into the cultural 'temples' of the city. These workshops and other learning opportunities aim to embed the ethos of lifelong learning within communities.

It targets socially excluded seniors aged 50+, and has been designed specifically to involve those older people in the community (including the frail elderly and ethnic minorities) who currently have little access to arts activities. It is especially targeted at those who would normally be excluded because of poverty of finance, opportunity or experience, or who impose barriers by believing that "the arts aren't for the likes of us." The two-year project aims to encourage participation by this group in arts activities and to forge links between professional arts organisations and local and community groups and individuals. There are several areas of multiple deprivation within Glasgow targeted by the programme, including Drumchapel, Greater Easterhouse, Castlemilk, Govan, Gorbals and Pollok.

The project covers a range of art forms, from dance, drama, film, literature, music and opera, to the visual and traditional arts. Major arts organisations involved include the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the London Sinfonietta, the Tron Theatre and the Glasgow Film Theatre.

Beginning in January 2002, ENCOURAGE has introduced over 6000 seniors to a wide range of vibrant arts activities and experiences. The identification of community-based cultural champions aims to ensure the sustainability of the project into the future.

This project is considered by the Scottish Executive to have great social and political significance and it is hoped that the presentation will inspire and enable colleagues to replicate our work.

Professor Raymond Thomson

Responsible for access and accredited programmes, and for quality in teaching and learning. Raymond also teaches courses in advanced music analysis for the Open University and is External Professor of Music for Fairfax University, Louisiana. His doctoral degrees in music and philosophy provide the background for analysis of culture as an ethical and democratic tool.

Introduction

The Encourage project is considered to have great social and political significance, because it encapsulates new ways of thinking with regard to problems of social exclusion, lifelong learning and citizenship.

The Social and Political Context

Glasgow was once proud to be called the second city of the Empire and was a very powerful industrial and political centre. Like many cities within the United Kingdom, it has suffered badly because of structural changes within the economy. The banks of the River Clyde are almost empty. Shipbuilding, railway and other heavy engineering are now distant memories. In the 1960s the city's political leaders decided on a policy of building houses on the periphery of the

city and demolishing the inner city slums. In common with most of the United Kingdom, this was badly done, resulting in housing schemes which have a resonance throughout the country: Castlemilk, Easterhouse, Drumchapel. These are currently areas of the highest urban deprivation in Europe. The areas of desolation left within the city, such as Springburn and Milton, have not fared much better. It is a typical post-industrial city, but writ large. There are high levels of unemployment with attendant crime and violence, poor health with a generally low life expectancy. Glasgow was, until recently a city going nowhere.

However, in the mid 1980s, a charismatic Lord Provost assumed control of the city. He realised that Glasgow's great industrial past could never be resurrected. The city began to transform itself. Here are the key moments. They were designed to place Glasgow on the European tourist map and to make the city attractive to potential inward investors. Culture was a significant element in this transformation, and the city is now a real powerhouse within Scotland and the United Kingdom. Culture and the culture industries has been extremely successful in the economic regeneration of the city, but it is now being seen as a political transformer. The city is still committed to Victorian idealism with regard to the transformatory power of the arts. The purpose of the ENCOURAGE Programme is to expand older people's involvement in the arts, to build bridges to those on the cultural margins of the city.

It targets socially excluded seniors aged 50+, and has been designed specifically to involve those older people in the community (including the frail elderly and ethnic minorities) who currently have little access to arts activities. It is especially targeted at those who would normally be excluded because of poverty of finance, opportunity or experience, or who impose barriers by believing that "the arts aren't for the likes of us."

The Encourage Project was launched on 30 January 2002 at the Ramshorn Theatre, University of Strathclyde. It is a Scottish Arts Council lottery funded project (under Access & Participation) and will operate throughout the City of Glasgow over a two year period.

There were three partners:
The SSI which is the lead partner.
The Dark Horse Venture
Glasgow City Council

The Project at Work

The aim is simple – to encourage older people who wouldn't normally attend arts performances and exhibitions to enjoy and understand them and find out what it's all about. But although the aim may be simple – the way it is beginning to evolve is rich and exciting. Through attending workshops, rehearsals, talks and performances the groups begin to feel a part of the whole. Not just a 'one-off' event. This 'package' of events starts out in the safe environment of their local centres but with the final aim of bringing the participants into the city to experience the many City Centre arts venues.

Glasgow is divided into eight Community Action Team (CAT) areas – four of which were initially tackled:

Area 1- Drumchapel and the west:
Area 5 – North Glasgow including Springburn & Milton:
Area 6 – Greater Easterhouse:
Area 8 – Castlemilk & South East.

In 2003 we began working with the CAT officers of the other four areas, bringing them on board the Encourage project. The CAT officers work with us in each of the CAT areas to identify possible target groups for Encourage to tackle. By introducing us to these groups the CAT

officers can give the Encourage project a sort of ‘seal of approval’ – an official link with the City Council – and we’re then not just seen as an alien group coming in!

The Encourage experience is based on learning packages, each developed with the help of the arts organisation’s education officers. There may be workshops, visits, interviews with actors, artists and musicians, and attendance at performances. Ideally the same participants attend all of the constituent parts of the package, but we know that there is a core who come to them all aspects, with others managing to dip into parts of it. Recent packages have included a Theatre Package based on a performance of “Shining Souls” in Glasgow’s Tron Theatre, and a music package on Mozart’s “The Magic Flute” developed with Scottish Opera.

An important part of Encourage is the discovery of interesting VENUES of which Glasgow is full. Theatres / art galleries / the rehearsal and technical centres of the RSNO / Scottish Opera / Scottish Ballet as well as backstage visits at the city’s theatres. We want the Encourager participant to not only visit these but also feel at home in them. One of the participants wrote after visiting Glasgow’s Gallery of Modern Art “We’ve got all these lovely places in Glasgow and we don’t know them – we’re never up this end of town!”

Our favourite quote from all the multitude of evaluation forms this project generates is also about a venue. A participant, after visiting the Glasgow Art Fair in George Square, said “ Beyond my expectations- I’d expected an old tent with pictures in it!”

There are four aspects which make this Glasgow Encourage project special:

The inclusion of Lifelong learning

This is an extremely important element in the Encourage packages and is something that once the programme is well under way in year two and beyond we will hope to expand further.

Making the arts accessible and ‘comfortable’ to groups

This is achieved by starting out in week one at the participants’ own centres and then bringing them in to experience all sorts of venues in the City Centre – de-mystifying these venues and art forms and giving these groups a sense of ownership and belonging.

The Encourage experience is developmental

It is not just a one-off performance, but a series of events which build up to a real understanding of the performance or exhibition.

Openness to all

We are able, with the help of the Arts Council, the City Council and the arts organisations, to make the attendance to these events affordable for a group who could not contemplate it normally.

It is a two-way traffic. The arts educators are going into the local centres, but people are coming out into their City to take part in the wonderful range of arts performances and projects which Glasgow hosts.

The whole idea of Encourage is to make all these arts accessible in every sense to these older people. They are helped in practical ways: with transport / by helping them to understand and appreciate what they are going to see – and by introducing them to all sorts of venues – wherever possible with a person they already know from Encourage or the arts organisation present to welcome them.

In addition we have a different kind of programme tailored to be suitable for Residential Homes. Working primarily with Call That Singing – one of the essential features of Encourage, the developmental side, will be present.

And there is another part which is our Arts Exchange programme with ethnic groups. This will be developed further under a Grundtvig 2 Learning Partnership and focuses on the arts as a catalyst bringing together older people from diverse cultures, Encourage has organised practical art workshops. Our aim is to promote understanding, tolerance and enjoyment of each other's cultures through art.

Progress so far

Total numbers of older adult attendances

AREA 1: Drumchapel & West :

AREA 2: North West

AREA 3: South Side

AREA 5: North Glasgow

AREA 6: Greater Easterhouse

AREA 7: East End

AREA 8: South East & Castlemilk

Ethnic Groups & Arts Exchange

Residential Homes

TOTAL attendances: 9000+

The future

Our aspirations include

An Encourage liaison person in place in each of the older people's centres who is a direct link with the Encourage administration and a familiar face. This would be very helpful and a big step forward. And this links in with the next point

An Encourage liaison person in each of the arts organisations who would take on the responsibility of co-ordinating with the Encourage administration and increasingly- directly with the older peoples' centres. We have been helped enormously in this respect by the education officers from the arts organisations, but the important point is their interest in Encourage.

Volunteer Champions who will emerge in time from each area to help run and promote Encourage.

We are also beginning to make important links with the Community Development Workers who work directly with the older people's groups.

A committed Encourage volunteer group, enlisted from among the University's Senior Studies Institute student group. They will help to provide a friendly and familiar Encourage presence at all events that are attended by older people's groups.

Encourage clubs. We are about to set up the first one in the Craighends area of Glasgow. In the near future there will also be a 'Castlemilk Encourage Club' and a 'Milton Encourage Club'.

Our hope is that Encourage will develop into an integral part of Glasgow's life.

Further details

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LIFE STARTS AGAIN AT 50 YEARS OLD? AN INTERVENTION FOR OLDER WORKERS

Synthesis of the intervention of Myriam Van Espen,
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Key words - Durable Development: Economic and Social Aspects, innovation, social, safety in the company .

Active ageing is one of the axis of the economic and social pillar of the project of Durable Development of the European Commission and the Strategy of Lisbon. Accordingly, Seniorinnovation, expert gerontologic office of the European Economical and Social Council worked out a pilot and innovating program for the French-speaking companies of Belgium. During the academic year 2005 - 2006, the directions of human resources of the companies of the Walloon Area were invited to perceive realities and the new stakes of a growing-old society and to adapt their management of their organization to this new paradigm of society: the quiet transformation of the population pyramid.

In order to found an Inter-ages Action Plan within each company and to thus preserve the dynamism of productivity within the structure, several questions were tackled during the session of which in particular

- family stakes,
- challenges of the transmission of the knowledge,
- data of a process of inter-generation training,
- the cartography of the careers,
- mechanisms of identification of competences, etc...

Project built in partnership with the Inter-university Center of Formation of Charleroi (CIFOP), in connection with the Association of the Personnel managers of the Province of Hainaut and with the support of the Federal Ministry for the Work of Belgium.

Myriam van Espen, Director, Senior Innovation, Brussels, is an international expert in gerontology through her innovative and creative work. From 1995 to 1999 she was coordinator of ageing policy at the National Union of Mutual Insurance Systems. From 1999-2004 she was Adviser in Policy to the Elderly and Family associated to the Social & Health Services Minister of the Walloon District, Belgium. www.seniorinnovation.com

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION FOR SENIOR CITIZENS - A TASK FOR MODERN UNIVERSITIES

Professor Petr Vavřín
Brno University of Technology, Czech Republic

Abstract

Studies for those of an advanced age are not an entirely new phenomenon in the history of European universities. With increasing life expectancy, however, it is clear that this once unusual type of life-long education is becoming a service that modern universities will be providing as standard. Another reason for the increasing importance of senior education is the speed with which the technology used in everyday life is changing. This does not just mean means of information and communication. It also relates to transport systems, banking, the entertainment industry and culture. People who are unable to adapt to these changes run the risk of losing contact with society, of ceasing to understand it, and thereby foregoing the opportunity of contributing to its further development.

The inclusion of senior courses in university programmes raises a number of questions and problems that must be resolved. First and foremost this involves the teaching method used. It goes without saying that experienced adults must be treated differently from twenty-year-old students. The way in which certification for those passing courses operates is also important. Another fundamental aspect to take into account is whether the students' motive for studying is merely personal interest, a desire to achieve something they did not, for one reason or another, achieve in their youth, or an effort to gain employment (generally part-time).

Universities of the Third Age were established in the Czech Republic in the nineteen eighties and nineties. The majority of lectures focused on a healthy lifestyle or the relationship between man and nature – in short the customary humanities. Technological subjects, including information and communication sciences, were opened at the Czech Technical University in Prague and Brno University of Technology at the turn of the century. In the years 2004 – 2007, the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic provided the sum of 0.5 million Euro every year to a project entitled “Support for U3A Infrastructure”. Thanks to this extraordinary support Czech universities are prepared to fulfil both the educational aspect of this new university activity, and its social and human role. Following a number of years of experience with hundreds of senior students we can confidently declare that the effect on the students' mental, psychological and physical state is at least as important, and beneficial for society, as their increasing knowledge itself. In view of the demographic prognosis, which indicates that people more than sixty-years-old will account for more than 30 % of the population of developed European countries in the year 2020 (from Herald Tribune, March 2006), this is a matter to which we must devote our attention.

Professor Petr Vavřín

Main professional area is digital control, cybernetics, applied AI and knowledge engineering. Also social and cultural aspects of automation, education in higher institutions, lifelong learning and adult education. From 2000 to 2007 Vice-President of EUCEN (European Universities Continuing Education Network) and president of Association Universities of the Third Age in Czech Republic.

Introduction.

From time immemorial, universities worldwide have fulfilled two basic functions: educating top experts (professional elites) and cultivating scientific research – investigation. In the 1960s, an opinion started to prevail that, apart from these activities, universities should participate in other social activities as well, namely analyses followed with subsequent formation of concepts for the development of the society, economic and ecological management, etc. This probably happened also because the original notion – coming maybe from the Middle Ages – of the specialised profile of the universities has changed a lot. The classic university fields (sometimes called humanities), that is philosophy, law, medicine and religion, were extended by economics, natural and technical sciences, and/or other technology-oriented fields (agriculture, computer science). Towards the end of the past century, the specialization of fields deepened further; therefore, today, it is no exception that educational and research institutions with narrow specialization bear the name of a “University” even though the meaning of the original Latin “Universum” has disappeared.

As a consequence of progress in the medical and health sciences, average age in developed countries keeps increasing, therefore demographic studies prognose fast population ageing. The number of inhabitants who reach their retirement age in great physical and mental conditions increases. However, the limit for withdrawal from active employment and for retirement does not increase at the same pace. Continuing automation of production and service activities contribute to constant threat of unemployment.

University education for seniors.

Offers of education designed specifically for the senior citizens have been included in university programmes since the 1970s. The main motivation includes the following:

1. upon retirement, people have more possibilities – in particular, more time – to achieve education which they did not complete during their working age for various reasons;
2. a particular field is subject of their interest (hobby) and they want to dedicate to it on the highest possible level;
3. many seniors seek opportunities to find at least partial employment, appropriate for their health condition and age;
4. seniors are aware that good-quality life is not possible without using modern technologies, common in everyday activities (computers, communication, trade, banking, utility chemistry, entertainment industry, etc.). All of these spheres are undertaking a relatively fast development and the ones who do not follow become gradually isolated.

The education possibilities offered to seniors at the universities differ a lot in form and scope in various countries. Though, mostly they have a common goal: to provide those interested not only with higher education and knowledge, but also to contribute significantly to their quality of life and maintaining active contact with the entire society.

The forms, scope, entry and economic conditions, in which individual educational programmes are implemented, are very different. As regards the form, passive participation in lectures prevails. It is rather exceptional that the study results are assessed by examination. There is interest in active work in the seminars and laboratories in the case of technical fields if the classes are methodologically adapted (verified especially while teaching to use PCs). Therefore, the most common form is lectures organized once a week. Thematically oriented courses take 1-2 semesters. The potential to use the acquired knowledge varies. In some countries, seniors may even use the titles acquired (Bc, Mgr, Dr) for the exercise of their profession, while elsewhere (e.g. in the Czech Republic) the law explicitly does not allow this. Also the financial costs of studies vary. In most European countries, a part of the costs are covered from the students' admission fees.

Universities of the Third Age in Czech Republic.

Courses and lectures designed specifically for the seniors have a long tradition in the Czech Republic. Already in the 1980s, the Charles University of Prague and later the universities of Olomouc and Ceske Budejovice organized lectures on healthy diet and proper lifestyle, on man and nature relationship, on the ways of dealing with the problems of ageing and the like. Senior education on the university level also appeared in the amendment to the Act on Universities of 1998. Courses focusing on practical application of new technologies, natural sciences and art disciplines have been in the offer of the Czech universities from 2000. Of the total number of 26 public (i.e. funded by the government) universities, senior education is offered by 21 universities. The offer usually includes a basic course, lasting for 1-3 years, which includes a summary cycle of lectures on the fields of the parent university and specialised courses, lasting for 1 to 2 semesters. Almost all universities also enable the seniors to access the Internet and offer training in the necessary information technology. Institutions, which run UTA, may be members of the Association of Universities of the Third Age in the Czech Republic. This organization, which currently has more than 40 members, organizes expert conferences, seminars and workshops, prepares situation reports and analyses for the ministries. Important success is the implementation of the development project "U3A Infrastructure Building", which has been awarded a yearly grant of Euro 0.5 million for the fourth time. With regard to the significance of this project, we will state several details.

Until 2003, courses and lectures for seniors were funded from the resources of the universities running them and from the students' admission fees. It is obvious that these were relatively small amounts not allowing to build-up the administration, to buy necessary computers and laboratory equipment. Also the fees paid for the preparation of top quality lectures could not correspond to the requested quality. Good results were therefore achieved thanks to the interest and enthusiasm of both teachers and students. In 2003, the AUTA CR prepared a project aiming at acquiring subsidy funds for 17 participating universities. Each of the participating schools elaborated a precise plan of utilization of the resources requested. These partial plans were submitted for internal opposition proceeding of AUTA CR and methodologically consolidated. The project was approved by the Ministry of Education for 2004-2007. The international congress of the AIUTA organization in September 2006 in Rheims stated that the Czech Republic was the only European country so far where the senior education was provided such a systemic financial assistance on the governmental level. This support was in line with the Governmental measures of 2002, known under the title of "Preparation of the Czech Republic for Population Ageing".

Conclusions.

It is unquestionable that university studies in senior age must be seen as a complementary part of the traditional education activities of university institutions. Its increasing importance is equally unquestionable. It is understandable that only a part of the population will participate in such a type of studies, both today and in the future. The most sought for field of learning nowadays, i.e. information and communication technologies, will probably be replaced by another topic in the future. The importance of intergenerational dialogue, which takes place within this activity between full-time students and seniors, acquires importance with growing acceleration of the revolutionary changes, taking place not only in the university environment, but in the entire society. Full-valued active life and proper orientation in necessary decision-making processes are only possible today with relatively high education. No matter whether we speak of understanding political, economic, environmental or social processes which take place in developed societies. The greater part of the society achieves the higher education, the greater chance we have that the future of this planet will not head for a more or less large-scale catastrophe. And if the seniors will represent more than one third of the population, then their part is not insignificant.

THE ROLE OF CONTEXT IN LATER LIFE LEARNING

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Abstract

Participation in learning (including creative and musical activities) in later life has been consistently shown to have beneficial effects for older people's well-being (although this term is subject to debate) and for some aspects of their health. Yet it is also known that they are the least likely of any age group to take part in formal educational activities. To date, research in later life learning has tended to focus on exploring the complex and multi-faceted reasons that might help to account for this including the identification of barriers to access and life-course analyses of learner identities. However, it has not adequately addressed how far the learning opportunities currently available accord with older people's lifestyles, interests, beliefs and expectations or the extent to which the varied settings, organisation and delivery of teaching take the processes of ageing into account. A better understanding of these factors would enable providers and practitioners to be more responsive to older people and to the 'baby boomers' who will be more disposed to seek learning opportunities in the future.

Acknowledging that considerable diversity exists among older people and that the availability of learning opportunities is located in political, economic, social and cultural developments, a multi-disciplinary team led by the University of Warwick is attempting to develop new insights into older people's experiences of participation in various different forms of learning activity through the identification and analysis of external, learning and learner contexts. The overall aim is to discover what role contextual factors play in facilitating participation and how they combine to affect the experience in different learning activities. A particular feature is the development of a new analytic software tool that will facilitate data analysis and integrate older people and stakeholders into the processes of research and dissemination. Progress to date will be discussed.

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to introduce a multidisciplinary research project that is in its early stages at the University of Warwick, although colleagues at two other UK Universities are also involved. It is hoped that findings will ultimately help to improve the experience of taking part in learning activities for all older people. Ideas for the research emerged informally during a residential weekend consultation with 35 older learners organised by the Association for Education and Ageing (AEA) in April 2006 and funded through Awards for All (A UK Lottery grants scheme for local communities).

Background

Participation in learning in later life including creative and musical activities has been consistently shown to have beneficial effects for older people's well-being (although this term is

subject to debate) and for some aspects of their health (Carlton and Soulsby, 1999; Dench and Regan, 2000; Schneider, 2003). Indeed, encouragement to continue learning as part of a wider active ageing strategy has long been European Union and World Health Organisation policy and can also be traced through a range of recent United Kingdom policy documents (eg Department of Health, 2001; Department of Work and Pensions, 2005; Social Exclusion Unit, 2006). Yet it is also known that older people, defined here as those who are post-work in the sense that they are no longer *primarily* concerned with earning a living and/or with major family responsibilities, are the least likely of any age group to take part in formal educational activity (Carlton and Soulsby, 1999; Aldridge and Tuckett, 2006). Some of the complex and multi-faceted reasons that might account for this have already been explored from different perspectives and in different parts of the world by, for example, Williamson (2000), Dench and Regan (2000), Findsen (2005), O'Dowd (2005), Pamphilon (2005), Boulton-Lewis *et al* (2006) and Withnall (2006) who examined life course influences in previous research.

What research has not so far adequately addressed is the extent to which the formally organised learning opportunities that are currently available actually accord with older people's lifestyles, interests, beliefs and expectations; or how far the varied settings, organisation and delivery of available opportunities take the processes of ageing into account (Withnall *et al*, 2004) Although it is recognised that some older people undertake a considerable amount of informal and self-directed learning (Withnall, 2003) a better understanding of the interplay of these factors would enable providers and practitioners (including those who organise activities for and with their peers) to be more responsive to older people and to the 'baby boomers' who, it is predicted, will be much more demanding of opportunities to continue learning in future. However, it has to be acknowledged at the outset that considerable diversity exists among older people and that the availability of learning opportunities is necessarily located in political, economic, social and cultural developments (Usher *et al*, 1997) so that the issues to be explored are extraordinarily complex.

One promising approach derives from the growth of interest in the concept of **context** in relation to adult learners in general (eg Lave and Wenger, 1991; Lave, 1996; Merriam and Cafferella, 1999) and, more recently, within discourses of lifelong learning (Edwards, 2006). Specifically, Gaskell (1999) has employed the concept to gain an insight into its effects on the motivation and participation of four groups of older learners in Scotland emphasising the organisation and processes of learning; and Eaton and Salari (2005) examined the extent to which the context – understood as the physical environment – of three multi-purpose senior centres in the USA supported educational activities. However, whilst the research that is discussed here draws on existing theoretical and conceptual approaches it interprets context more broadly as having **external** (structural), **learning** (interactive) and **learner** (individual) dimensions in relation to older learners' participation. The research is located within a critical paradigm that recognises the contextual nature of later life learning and the need for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding how context and experiences of participation in learning intersect. Planned data analysis methods involve the creation of a software tool that can promote understanding of contextual features and assess their impact using intelligent systems technologies. Accordingly, this collaborative project involves colleagues working in educational gerontology, architecture, ergonomics, engineering and old age psychiatry.

Aims and objectives of the research

The overall aims of this research are to develop new insights into older people's experiences of participation in different forms of formally organised learning activity through the identification of those contextual aspects that could help to promote more effective and relevant provision and increase learner choice; and to facilitate communication about these aspects amongst all concerned in devising opportunities that are attractive to older people. There are four main objectives which inform the processes of the research:

1. Empirical To develop a comprehensive picture of:

(i) **the external context** of later life learning which includes (a) analysis of policy development and recent UK age discrimination legislation (b) a typology of available provision in the UK

(ii) **the learning context** to include (a) accessibility (b) the physical dimensions of different learning environments and associated social spaces (c) purposes, process and content in different learning situations

(iii) **the learner context** to explore diversity in older learners' biographies, current socio-economic environments, health status and a key cognitive ability and the impact of these on decisions about, and current experiences of participation in learning

2. Theoretical To devise a new conceptual framework within which to understand, illuminate and promote older people's participation in learning activities

3. Methodological To make use of visual methods; and to also develop a new analytic software tool using an iterative approach to tool design that will (a) enable a multidisciplinary team to function effectively (b) combine a range of quantitative and qualitative techniques and facilitate data analysis (c) integrate older people and stakeholders into the processes of both research and dissemination

4. Practical To develop an on-line toolkit, powered by an intelligent software engine, that can be accessed by interested parties to provide information and to facilitate communication concerning the broad range of contextual factors that facilitate later life learning in respect of different older learners at national, regional and local levels in a variety of settings.

Research methods

To address the diversity of issues to be considered in the research, the research is being carried out in four overlapping stages and a range of quantitative and qualitative methods are being employed. A particular feature will be the involvement of a team of older learners themselves in Stage 2 in partnership with the research team bearing in mind the issues raised by Dewar (2005) and Clough *et al.* (2006) regarding participatory approaches. The stages have been planned as follows.

Stage 1: External context (i) Identification and review of relevant EU and UK policy documents and legislation (ii) Postal survey by questionnaire of types of agencies/institutions offering learning opportunities attractive to older people using a comprehensive mapping tool (Gladdish *et al.*, 2005) as a framework (n=65). Those selected will be exempt from recent UK age discrimination legislation or offer activities that are found to mostly benefit older learners. The questionnaire will be derived from the Critical Pathways Taxonomy, a validated measure developed in the USA by Manheimer *et al.* (1995) that seeks details of the planning, implementation and evaluation of different opportunities for older learners and allows for cross-comparisons.

Stage 2: Learning context (i) A literature review will be undertaken to identify key environmental design features likely to influence older learners' experiences of participation and a checklist developed for comparative purposes (Burton and Mitchell, 2006) (ii) Using the Stage 1 framework, 10 agencies/institutions are being selected for in-depth investigation chosen to represent geographical spread and a wide range of types of learning activities; any available educational policy statements/publicity material produced by each agency will be examined. An example of one site used by each agency/institution will be visited for (a) detailed investigation of physical environmental features including accessibility, using the checklist developed in (i). In addition, a group of 5 older learners at each site will be equipped with disposable cameras and asked to provide visual evidence of what they consider to be salient features of the learning environment for exhibition and group discussion with members of the research team (b) semi-

structured interviews will be carried out with 1-2 organisers/administrators and up to 5 teaching staff at each site, depending on size, to gain further information concerning purposes, content of course or activity and pedagogy. Interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed (c) focused observation of one learning group will take place at each site over 6 weeks to uncover patterns of behaviour and interactions with the environment using field notes to develop further context-sensitive checklists. The numbers, time allowed, methods chosen and the multidisciplinary approach will allow for a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of each setting to emerge.

Stage 3: Learner context A random sample of 10 older learners at each site (n=100) selected by tutors from class registers/attendance lists will be invited to participate in 2 interviews to be held separately at least one week apart. These will involve (i) administration of a quality of life instrument, the Short Form-36 (SF-36) that measures 8 dimensions of health and has been validated for older people when administered by an interviewer; and the Rey Auditory Verbal Learning Test (Schmidt, 1996) that requires the memorization and recall of easily retained information. Taken together with standard socio-economic measures an understanding will be gained of learners' current health statuses and lifestyles and a key cognitive ability involved in learning (ii) in-depth semi-structured interviews will be carried out designed to understand interviewees' experiences of learning across the life course and experiences of current participation. These will be tape recorded and transcribed.

Stage 4: At this point, all data sets will be integrated, overall analysis completed and the on-line toolkit will be launched. However, it is planned that findings will be disseminated to interested parties as they emerge throughout the duration of the fieldwork and feedback invited.

Management and organisation of the work

Because of the complexity of the project, one member of the research team is taking overall responsibility for each stage although it is intended to employ a team approach to data collection and analysis. Regular team meetings are planned to address the complexities of ensuring interdisciplinary integration and to sustaining multi-level networking between the Principal and Co-Investigators and more junior research staff. One major task is obviously the development of the proposed software tool for purposes of data analysis and the on-line toolkit to offer information and facilitate future communication. The software will have a web based interface created to facilitate participation, as well as an Intelligent Data Processing Engine. This will adapt the interface to the type of user; store and classify data using Artificial Intelligence techniques; provide the user with information relevant to their request; and incorporate user feedback in the process of classification, thus providing a self-learning tool. Feedback to participants will be incorporated into all stages of the research and they will be invited to comment on the interface design of the toolkit.

During the summer of 2007, an engineering student who has been funded through an internal University of Warwick bursary and who will be responsible for the conceptual design of the tool will spend a nine-week period researching the types of tools available and specifying their suitability for the task. In particular, he will apply Artificial Intelligence techniques to available sets of data, research types of user interfaces and specific access requirements for users (to include older people) and create the general software design. Meanwhile, an international group of academics and practitioners with expertise in later life learning have each agreed to act as Critical Friends for the overall duration of the research and a number of relevant organisations will assist with dissemination and publicity.

Expected outputs

Apart from the usual website and discipline-specific academic papers, it is intended that there will be a number of other outputs from the research. As described, potential users will have

access to an on-line toolkit containing details of those aspects of context that the research has shown to be important in supporting later life learning. There will be a series of datasets offering a valuable resource for other researchers; and a photographic exhibition to be staged in conjunction with the older people who take part in Stage 2 of the project. It is also hoped to organise a final public seminar together with other appropriate organisations which will be targeted at policy makers, practitioners in a wide range of ageing enterprises and interested older learners themselves. This will focus on the implications of the research findings in order to raise awareness of the findings and potential usage of the on-line toolkit.

Progress: engagement and partnership

Considerable work has already been undertaken as a preliminary to Stage 1 and some contact made with possible agencies/institutions to gauge who would be willing to participate further if selected. It has been surprising to discover just how many varied learning activities around the UK are now open to older people. To give just two recent examples - a particularly exciting initiative is the Heydays project held in a theatre (the West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds). This is a creative arts project for people aged 55 and over who want to try their hand at drama, painting, singing, arts and crafts, dancing, play reading or creative writing. The programme also offers discussion groups, relaxation and exercise classes and talks with all abilities catered for. In Cumbria (north-west England), an initiative that has attempted to improve services for older people in museums has recently been piloted mainly focused on reminiscence activities and stressing the benefits of partnership working for successful learning outcomes relevant to older people's expectations. The research team is well aware of the potential for publicising and sharing details of innovative and exciting learning opportunities for older people that are being developed outside traditional educational institutions at a time of uncertainty about the future of publicly adult education in the UK

Conclusion

This research project arose out of a conviction that educational gerontologists need to move on from exploring basic issues of participation and non-participation in respect of older people - important though these still are - and to address the issues through more intensive concentration on older people's actual experiences of learning within a much broader framework. It may also be that as educationalists we have hitherto been too constrained by the somewhat limited range of research methods that have been employed. A multidisciplinary approach enables us to draw on the expertise of colleagues with other specialisms, to expand our own horizons and to involve older people themselves in the research process as part of a new more collaborative approach to thinking about how research might benefit our practice.

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A Brief Introduction to the Present Situation of Wuhan University for the Aged and Its Future

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Abstract

This paper will give a brief introduction to the administrative modes of WHUA, and displays the ten highlights of its management mechanism. WHUA provides well-designed multi-curriculum of different levels to fit the needs and interests of aged people of different educational backgrounds. It describes several basic methods of how to integrate the comprehensive development with the present situation of the school. We appeal with great enthusiasm to the education workers around the world to go hand in hand, exchange our experiences so as to enhance the new development of the third age education.

Professor Zhou Jilong

Formerly a civil servant and sociology professor. Now he is vice-president of Wuhan University for the Aged (WHUA), a consultant for Hubei Modern Research Institute for the Aged, vice-chairman of Wuhan Association of Research on Elderly Education (WHAREE) and consultant for Wuhan Association of Poetry. He has been chief editor and edited together with others nine books of poems and essays. In recent years, two papers about elderly education have attracted many scholars' attention and been influential in China.

Introduction

I am from Wuhan University for the Aged (WHUA) in China. Wuhan is located at 113°41' to 115°05' east longitude and 29°58' to 31°22' northern latitude as the capital of Hubei province in China. It looks like a butterfly with an area of 8,494 km² and a population of 8.3 millions, acting as the center of politics, economy, commerce, finance and technology and as a famous touristic resort in Central China. Wuhan has a 3,500-year-long history and is full of brilliant culture, stories and beautiful sceneries. Wuhan is located at the confluence of the Changjiang and Hanjiang Rivers, which divides the city into three parts—Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang. It is a fast-developing city that connects China with the outside world.

I am very glad to be invited by the University of Strathclyde to present here for the meeting. On behalf of Professor Jin, the president of Wuhan University for the Aged, I am honored to send his kind regards to all of you and congratulations for the 20th anniversary of the Center for Lifelong Learning in this university.

WHUA was established in May 6, 1985 by the efforts of Wuhan municipal government and some of the veteran cadres who expected to help seniors to learn in later life in China.

From then on, the university has been run in a mode of government support, social initiation, the participation of the aged people with the leadership of the board of directors to implement the responsibility system. It has an experience from small to large and weak to strong. Today, it has been constructed into a comprehensive senior's university with multiple curriculums, modes, levels and functions for the aged. Here, ten characteristics are shown for WHUA.

1. Running conditions greatly improved Wuhan municipal government has invested 10 million yuan (1.5 million dollars) in a 6,000-square-meter teaching building with 9 specialized

classrooms for computer, digital piano, electronic musical instrument, Guzheng (a traditional Chinese musical instrument) , language, Chinese calligraphy, painting, fashion show teaching. Rooms for showing the achievements of teaching, displaying honor, for lecture, for reading or lounge are included. Besides, we have an old school building. The total area of our university is 7,200 square meters with 22 classrooms and more than 112 computers, 25 digital pianos, 25 electronic organs, 50 Guzhengs, 48 sets of speech systems and 5 sets of photographic equipments.

2. Gradually expanding scale of teaching There are 3,750 trainees in WHUA and 3,200 learners in its teaching stations outside. The university has 8 departments and 1 art college, including literature and history, politics and economy, Chinese calligraphy, painting, medical care, arts & sports, modern technology and housekeeping, with 38 majors, 106 courses and 190 classes. The teaching mechanism characterized as combination of the common with specific, long with short, inside with outside has been set up with multiple levels, ways and forms.

3. Standardizing the management of WHUA In recent years, both academic and administrative management has been vigorously regulated by the university. Forty-six regulations have been established to manage the staffs, students, classes, equipments and finance. WHUA has 6 departments that are responsible for educational administration, teaching material management, communication services, school services and literary sports management, respectively. There have been 70 categories and 927 volumes of profiles kept in these departments orderly and always ready for use.

4. Teaching material construction contributing to the whole country The teaching material compiled by WHUA is well-known in China for its benefit to the aged. There have been 124 textbooks printed 1.26 million copies, and 1.14 million of them are used by more than 600 schools for the aged in China. A computer textbook, one of the first unification books planned by the Association of Chinese Universities for the Aged, was compiled by the professors of WHUA and published by the Chinese Big Encyclopedia Publishing House and has been welcoming to the learners in China.

5. Remarkable enhancement of teaching quality Different levels of courses about politics, culture, technology, arts and sports are heartedly welcomed to the learners of the aged in Wuhan. The percentage of the high-level-content classes has been up to 31% with many renowned teachers. 87% of the 117 teachers in WHUA are professors or associate-professors. Emphasis of combining knowledge with practice leads to great interest to learn. Scene dialogues for language learning, simulating court for law classes, etc, have been used to attract learners and enhance the quality of teaching.

6. Increasing progress in research of the aged learning At the foundation of WHUA, it sponsored Wuhan Association of Research on Elderly Education (WHAREE), and the journal named Education Research for the Aged began to be compiled by the university. WHAREE has more than 400 members, and 40 of them are specialists from universities, colleges or institutes. There have been 1,340 papers or investigations about learning in the third age by WHUA in these 22 years. Among them, 335 works have been exchanged on special forums or meetings, 304 have been published by magazines or periodicals, 276 have gained rewards from different organizations and 35 have been exchanged on international meetings with foreign researchers.

7. Remarkable achievements in teaching and learning Exhibitions for paintings of peony, plum blossom or landscape organized by the university have aroused the interest of the whole society, have gained high praise from the experts and have been broadcasted by the Medias. Some of the paintings have ever been collected by some friends from abroad. There are 250 person-times and more than 600 paintings and calligraphy works to attend different levels of competitions, 50

percent of them have been awarded. The learners usually give theatrical performances to show what they have learned in the university, and they enjoy themselves while displaying the beauty in the third age and expressing their good feelings about life. Li Daolin, a national retired writer, began to learn painting in 2001 in WHUA. To his surprise, he has won two gold, one bronze and four silver medals and has been called one of the 100 Chinese Aged Outstanding Painters. Zhang Yanlin who learns photography in WHUA has won a national golden prize for her work of A Lady. His works have been shown in Pingyao International Photography Exhibition and even abroad. Chinese traditional medicine, which roots in the Chinese history and culture, has attracted many learners, too. And they know what is important or necessary for their body and how to keep them fit in Chinese way.

8. Extending networks of long distant education WHUA has regular relations with the education channel of Wuhan TV and Hubei Radio Station. Many lessons, such as Geriatric Medicine, Chinese Tea Culture, Geriatric Social Psychology and Practical Chinese Medicine have ever been taught for the aged friends in this way. The lessons of how to keep health by activating footplates are being shown now. The web site of WHUA is www.wuhanua.org.cn, which was built up in 2001 and can give you an overall view of WHUA.

9. Close relations and active exchanges with other schools WHUA has close relations with more than 400 domestic centers of education or research. In June of 1989, the university was invited to attend the 14th International Meeting for the aged held in Mexico and to introduce learning in the third age in China to the world for the first time. In that November, an International Seminar on Elderly Education, sponsored by UNESCO, was held in Wuhan. WHUA provided excellent service for the seminar. On that seminar, Wuhan Declaration had been passed to call the governmental and nongovernmental organizations around the world should pay attention on protecting learning right of the aged. In Oct. of 2002, WHUA held another international meeting, the 13th International Conference of TALIS (Third Age Learning International Studies) in Wuhan. WHUA has attended international conferences in Canada, France, Italia, Malta, Switzerland, Germany, U.S.A, Brazil, Britain and China and exchanged ideas and experiences with foreign scholars and colleagues.

10. Effective demonstration as a model WHUA acts as a model to influence and regulate the education development for third age in Wuhan. Today, besides the main part, WHUA consists of 34, 156 and 1198 brunches in colleges (or institute), countryside (or little towns) and neighborhood (or villages), respectively. It has totally 134,000 learners, which is 14.11% of Wuhan's population.

After all, the fundamental experience of WHUA's development is to plan and construct as a whole all the time. It is important and necessary that the coordinated developments of education in the third age and aging population, quantity and quality, common and high level, social and human culture, teaching and research, and hardware and software. For sake of the coordinated developments, our methods are as follows: 1) definite aims to manage the university are necessary; 2) to recruit students from the aged as generally as possible; 3) requirements of these aged learners are targeted and performed in a reasonable way by the university, accompanied by timely progress and increasing majors; 4) various kindly measures carried out for the students to be satisfied and free when they learn.

In order to get more progress in education for the aged, the development strategy of WHUA has been built up as follows: 1) to try to construct it to be a top university for the aged in China, according to the coming responsibilities; 2) to keep reinforcing theory researches of education for the aged, based on practice of teaching; 3) to expand actively education of base schools for the aged, acting as the core of it; 4) to strengthen communications and exchanges on education in the third age with friends from all over the world, seeking more progress on global education of later life all together.